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ABSTRACT

This collection of papers on teaching English as a second language includes the following: (1) "Testing: A Case for Cooperation," by Paul A. Angelis; (2) "Developing a Learning Syllabus in ESL by Teacher Consensus," by Donald Byrd; (3) "Using Debate in ESOL," by Janet Constantinides and Mary Fry; (4) "Non-Verbal Films for Discussion," by Stephen Duffy; (5) "Testing Reading Comprehension in ESL: Background and Current State of the Art," by David Harris; (6) "Reading English as a Second Language," by Betty Wallace Robinett; (7) "Productivity in Intermediate and Advanced Levels of ESL," by Jacquelyn Schachter; and (8) "Training Teachers for the Role of Nonverbal Communication in the Classroom," by Harvey Taylor. (CFM)

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PAPERS IN ESL

Selected Conference Papers of the Association of Teachers of English as a Second Language

1974 NAFSA CONFERENCE, ALBUQUERQUE
1975 NAFSA CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

EDITED BY
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PAPER ONE

Testing: A Case for Cooperation

PAUL J. ANGELIS
TEXAS A. AND M. UNIVERSITY

At a recent conference on the role of testing in education, a member of a panel prefaced his remarks by telling the following story about a U.S. agricultural expert.

This well-known scientist had been sent to a certain west African country as part of a team whose mission was to make recommendations on ways of increasing livestock production. Being a native Texan, the American soon determined that a quick solution to the problem of inadequate numbers and quality of livestock would be to import a prize Texas bull. And so, within a month after the appropriate requests had been made to the project director and forwarded to Washington, a large Texas bull arrived by air. Pleased with the efficiency of their project to date, the team of experts quickly sent the bull out to mingle with the local cows. There was little doubt in the minds of the experts that the American bull would do his duty. Feeling very confident, they sat back to let nature take its course.

Before long, however, a new problem began to appear. There was indeed an increase in the number of calves being born. But, just as before, very few of them lived and the ones which did survive seemed no hardier than the earlier ones. A quick survey revealed that the new stock were the offspring of local cows and local bulls and the prize American bull had not taken his active part as expected. The Americans were faced with the task of explaining these unexpected results to the local authorities who also had looked for a far different outcome.

After a lengthy discussion among the visiting experts, the American scientist suggested that he try to communicate with the guest bull to see what had gone wrong. He reasoned that since he came from Texas, as did the bull, there would be some chance that he could succeed. So, the entire group gathered outside at once and watched intently as the American scientist went over to the bull and whispered something in his ear. Suddenly, the startled bull jumped back and said in a very loud voice, "Produce? I thought I was only an advisor!"

While livestock production is far removed from our more familiar areas of teaching and research, this story has a very clear message for those of us who work in the complex world of higher education. The entire decision-making process, from admission to graduation, requires coordination and cooperation. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of foreign students studying at U.S. colleges and universities. Only by pooling the resources of all university divisions concerned can we expect meaningful solutions to the problems which arise. And "pooling resources" means requiring each group on campus not only to advise the others but to take an active role to produce.

At any institution with a large number of foreign students, it is extremely important to seek help from a variety of sources in trying to arrive at even partial answers to questions. Some of the most pressing questions for which we have no definite answers are the following:

1. How long is the adjustment period for for-

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eign students who begin academic work immediately after entering the U.S. from their home country?

2. What is the effect of any change in the type of instruction from that to which the student is accustomed, e.g. seminars vs. lectures or objective vs. subjective testing?

3. What is the reaction of native U.S. students to the foreigners studying on their campus?

4. What are the expectancies of faculty and administrators toward foreign students?

5. What aspects of English are most important for the academic success of foreign students?

The groups of individuals who need to cooperate in trying to answer these questions would be the foreign student admissions personnel, any department or office concerned with the testing of foreign students, the various academic departments in which foreign students are enrolled, and any groups in English, modern language or separate ESL programs which are responsible for the English training of foreign students.

The foreign student advisor, while not usually involved in academic problems, can also provide valuable assistance in a number of areas, including problems relating to language.

This paper describes such a cooperative project, currently in the planning stage, which is meant to focus on the problem of English language testing. At Texas A.&M. University more than 1,000 foreign students are enrolled in full time study. Approximately one-fourth (251) are Chinese speakers; another fourth are Spanish speakers from all countries in Central and South America (255); the remaining half (517) are from some 40 other countries, with the largest numbers coming from Iran (76), India (62), Thailand (45), Pakistan (40), and Vietnam (32)[1]. The students are almost equally divided between graduate and undergraduate and the vast majority are studying in scientific and technical fields such as Engineering, Chemistry, Meteorology, and Agriculture.

In the area of testing, cooperative solutions are needed first for admissions and second for screening or placement. In both of these types of testing there are two principal questions to be asked:

1. Can the candidate function in an English speaking environment to satisfy his *daily* needs?

2. Can he function in an English speaking environment to satisfy his *academic* needs?

More importance is generally given to the second. But the assumption is frequently made that if a foreign student has enough proficiency in English for academic purposes, he will also be able to handle all day-to-day situations requiring English. This is not always the case.

In making decisions regarding admission, administrative personnel can often benefit from the advice of testing or language specialists. Although the TOEFL test is the most widely used measure of English language proficiency in U.S. colleges and universities, scores on this test are interpreted by admissions offices in a wide variety of ways. Through proper consultation with knowledgeable persons on campus, the administrative staff should conclude that it is important to use part scores as well as a candidate's total score. Also, they should realize that a sliding scale needs to be used rather than hard and fast cutoff scores.

Two important factors to consider in using TOEFL are level of study (undergraduate or graduate) and field of study (science, technical, humanities, etc.). It is often reasonable to require a greater level of proficiency for new undergraduates than for graduate students. This is true since the undergraduate will most likely be on campus for four years rather than one or two and because he faces a battery of required courses beyond his major field, often including literature. The graduate student is enrolled for sometimes only a year, rarely takes courses outside his own field, and almost never in literature. At Texas A.&M., as at most institutions, this currently means he will be enrolled in a scientific or technical field.

Furthermore, administrative personnel need to be aware of the fact that a candidate's score on the TOEFL test cannot be used as the sole basis for all decisions regarding placement, course load, or required non-credit English training. Two major reasons dictate the use of a university-wide test of English for all incoming foreign students. First of all, it is important to get as accurate a picture as possible of the student's English proficiency. TOEFL is still the best test available for determining a foreign applicant's proficiency in English before he is admitted, especially if he is out of the country. But once he has arrived on campus, another test or tests is needed to determine his current proficiency in certain specific skills requiring English. Secondly, testing on admission prevents the harmful situation of letting as much as a year or more go by before learning that a student is having difficulty with his courses because of his deficiencies in English.

Once the decision has been made to test students on arrival, the stage is set for the most widespread cooperation among the groups involved. The language people can work together with members of various academic departments to determine test objectives. With these established, the testing spe-

[1]The figures given are for the academic year 1974-75.

cialists can provide their expertise to design the actual test to be administered. At Texas A.&M. we are working on a plan whereby each of the academic departments in which most foreign students are enrolled will assist in deciding what English skills are required and to what degree. As a general rule, however, we are working on the principle that academic considerations require a greater degree of proficiency, especially in reading and writing, than non-academic situations. Thus while the work of Burt and others has indicated that for adult education allowances can be made in what students are expected to achieve in English, the same is not true, at least to the same degree, in the academic world (Burt, 1975).

Although no definite conclusions have been reached with regard to the design of the test to be used for screening, there is strong support for the idea that the test should be different from the TOEFL. Readministering that test or one similarly designed would seem redundant. While TOEFL is norm-referenced, the new test should be criterion-referenced. We are not so much interested in how the candidate's score relates to scores of other groups of non-native speakers as we are in how well he can achieve a set of carefully defined objectives on required skills such as those mentioned above.

There are additional reasons for choosing such a format. In academic circles, an important issue which is frequently raised is how the non-native English-speaking foreign student compares to his native-English speaking counterparts. As indicated by Oller (1973), integrative tests discriminate better between native and non-native speakers. Also, criterion-referenced tests can, if designed properly, give an accurate view of how the natives and non-natives compare in the particular skills tested.

The three skills to be included in the proposed test are reading, writing, and listening comprehension. While no decision has yet been made on the item types for each section, it is our hope to incorporate as much content material from the various subject areas as possible. If candidates are divided according to their field of study, reading passages can be taken from those fields. The success which cloze tests have had to date leads us to believe that that method can be useful for a more comprehensive and integrative assessment of a person's reading and writing ability. A more specific test of writing is planned, using sentence-combining and paraphrase item types.

Finally, we intend to test listening comprehension by means of dictation and questions on simulated lectures. But the lectures will be taken from the candidate's intended major field of study and will be recorded by instructors in those departments. One aspect of listening comprehension which we hope to get at in this way is dialect. It is rare that a foreign student has been exposed to a wide variety of regional dialects beyond standard American and British. Yet, when the student first begins study at a U.S. university (especially if he just arrived from his home country), he may have difficulty understanding the type of English he hears around him and used in classroom lectures.

Since individuals may vary in their ability to adjust to dialect difference, it will be helpful to know how well a foreign student can perform in a listening task directly related to what will be required of him as a student at the university in question. A test of English proficiency can afford to be general; a test used to answer questions related to a foreign student's ability to begin immediate study via English cannot. Likewise, in testing writing as much specific information as possible is needed to estimate a student's ability to perform the tasks required in his courses in his field. The sentence-combining and paraphrase item types mentioned above represent a compromise between subjective evaluations of general writing samples and separate discrete point items found in tests such as TOEFL.

Testing is but one area in which a cooperative approach can be implemented. But it is a very important one, affecting decisions on placement and course load. We can continue to provide temporary solutions to such questions by having language departments, admissions offices, or academic departments decide for themselves what course to follow. Or, we can try to involve all of these groups in the decision-making process. The point of the work in which we are currently involved, as well as our earlier story from Africa, is that it is not enough for each group to advise or assist the others. They must all contribute in an active way—they must produce.

If our results are encouraging with regard to testing, a similar approach should prove successful in trying to answer some of the broader but unanswered questions raised earlier. In any case, there can be no danger in trying.

PAPER TWO

Developing a Learning Syllabus in ESL by Teacher Consensus

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Preparing a language syllabus is an onerous task for anyone. Materials writers must think through their syllabus before they actually write the materials. Classroom teachers, too, are sometimes called on to write a syllabus for use in special situations. Too often, the result in both cases is one person's less-than-objective listing of grammatical structures.

Syllabus preparation is especially complicated by the fact that little reseach has been devoted to the scope, the nature, and the focus of the language syllabus. More important is the fact that current studies in second language acquisition seem to chart a "natural" acquisition order of grammatical items for all second language learners (Burt and Dulay, 1973, 1974; Bailey, Madden, and Krashen, 1975).

These findings that all learners seem to acquire morphemes in roughly the same order have certainly enhanced the specificity of the items to be included in the language syllabus. However, so far no one has yet set forth a total grammar of naturally sequenced items and such a grammar, in order to be useful, would have to be based on empirical studies that would in themselves require years of observation and validation.

Those studies in second language acquisition which have established natural sequences even for a very limited number of beginning grammatical items are in great need of more extensive follow-up. Acquiring a morpheme does not mean learning it *per se*, simply because "one robin does not make a spring." That is, the production of one morpheme does not mean the learner has mastered its total distribution in the grammatical system. Subsequent second language acquisition studies need to focus on the entry and re-entry of morpheme types as proof of total learning. Along these lines, Krashen (1975) has made a needed distinction between language learning and language acquisition. Acquisition is the way children learn their first language or their second language (if "naturally" acquired without formal instruction). Language learning, by comparison, is accompanied by a conscious focus on discrete rule formation and on error correction (Krashen and Seliger, in press).

The acquisition sequences between children and adults is probably quite similar in that the order of adult acquisition of morphemes may follow an invariant order not different from that found for children learning English as a second language (Bailey et al, 1975).

Many of the studies in second language acquisition deal with children who do not demonstrate a need for formal instruction. It is not new, of course, that second language learning in post-puberty learners is a laborious procedure (Lenneberg, 1967) and that adults respond more favorably to formal instruction. Krashen et al (1975) have even stated that after pubrty a second language may not be learned at all without formal instruction.

There is a great deal of promise in the idea of a natural acquisition system in children and adults, but right now it is only a promise. As surprising as it may

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seem, altering the presentation of language items has little if any affect on the sequence of acquisition of these same items. Freeman and Perkins (1975) established just this point: there is an invariable difficulty order of morphemes, suggesting an invariant order of acquisition, regardless of the order of presentation. Consequently, any attempt to wholly re-vamp a language syllabus to parallel a "natural" sequence is, to say the least, precipitous and premature. There is even the risk of distorting real language use if such attempts to reflect natural sequencing were made.

Where does all this leave the person who is saddled with the necessity of developing a language syllabus? Probably alone. However, it does not have to be so.

A recent study approached syllabus preparation from a different point of view—a collective one. It is based on the premise that trained and experienced ESL teachers possess specific insights into linguistics and language learning. These teachers show a high ability to agree on the intrinsic difficulty of language items (Byrd and Dumicich, 1975).

A questionnaire was prepared containing names and examples of forty-five major grammatical structures in English as a Second Language. Each one of these structures was an autonomous or discrete entry and did not prescribe any contiguous sequence.

Using any criteria they chose, teachers from widespread ESL programs were asked to place a check on a continuum from zero to nine to indicate at which point the structure should be learned; zero represented very beginning and nine, very advanced. Of varying methodologies and experiences, 50 ESL teachers of adults took the questionnaire. The preferences of these teachers was converted to a five-level spectrum, resulting in the statistical tabulation of a teacher consensus (percentages and means) as to which structures make up each level of a learning syllabus. The means, not to be confused with learning levels, could possibly range in polarity from 0.0 to 5.0.

The resulting tabulation in Figure 1 shows that the entry of each structure is discontinuous and discontiguous, but it is important, in spite of this discontinuity and discontiguousness, to note the entry of the presentation. Hierarchies of complexity are shown, i.e., *be* before "present continuous" (items 1 and 2), uninflected "commands" before the inflected "habitual present" (items 4 and 6), "nouns: plural formation" before "pronominalization" where the former is necessary for the correct suppletion by the latter (items 3 and 5). Apart from these apparent hierarchical combinations, there are demonstrated choices of simplicity criteria such as comparative and superlative of adjectives before the more complex adjective structures of equality and intensity (items 10 and 18). In terms of markedness criteria, the simple past of regular verbs precedes the presentation of past tense of irregular verbs allowing the former to serve the student as more general bases for analogy (items 7 and 14).

Figure 1: Structure Level Assignments by ESL Teachers

STRUCTURE		LEVELS 1	2	3	4	5	MEAN
1.	*be* + complement	90.7	7.0	2.3	—	—	.744
2.	present continuous	90.7	9.3	—	—	—	.767
3.	nouns: plural formation	88.4	11.6	—	—	—	.802
4.	commands	76.2	19.1	4.8	—	—	.928
5.	pronominalization	73.9	21.5	2.4	2.4	—	1.000
6.	habitual present	65.1	27.9	7.0	—	—	1.128
7.	simple past-regular	57.2	35.8	7.2	—	—	1.178
8.	WH—questions	62.5	30.0	7.5	—	—	1.187
9.	future: *will*	53.5	41.9	7.0	—	—	1.325
10.	adjectives: comp. & super	47.6	42.9	9.3	2.4	—	1.450
14.	simple past: irregular	13.5	62.1	24.3	—	—	1.863
18.	adjectives: equality/intensity	10.0	45.0	40.0	2.5	2.5	2.150
43.	cleft sentences	2.4	4.8	11.9	35.7	45.3	3.976
44.	uninflected 3ps after MV (*demand*)	—	—	21.4	42.8	35.7	4.095
45.	complex passives	—	—	15.0	37.5	47.5	4.112

Figure 2 shows the results of this same questionnaire as taken by educators with experience and training comparable to the ESL teachers. Comparing the two figures yields the following points: (1) ESL teachers show greater agreement in designating the entry of an item on a learning continuum (ESL teachers showed 90.7% agreement on the first two items where as non-ESL educators showed only 52.6% and 43.5% agreement on the same grammatical items.); (2) continuous sequences were placed in "logical" order by ESL teachers, e.g., "*be* + complement" precedes "present continuous" where Figure 2 shows "illogical" sequences illustrated by items 4 and 5 where "WH-questions" are chosen to precede the entry of all tenses except the "simple past" (item 3); (3) ESL teachers showed greater *specificity* in placing an item on the learning spectrum (the means of ESL teachers show a wide range from .744 to 4.112 while the range of non-ESL educators is more limited—1.026 to 3.846); (4) ESL teachers appear to exhibit a

Figure 2: Structure Level Assignments by Non-ESL Educators

STRUCTURE		LEVELS	1	2	3	4	5	MEAN
1.	commands		76.3	18.4	2.6	2.6	—	1.026
2.	nouns: plural formation		71.8	20.5	5.2	2.6	—	1.092
3.	simple past		65.8	31.6	2.6	—	—	1.092
4.	WH—questions		60.5	31.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	1.276
5.	*be* + complement		52.6	36.9	7.9	2.6	—	1.315
6.	pronominalization		47.3	42.1	2.6	7.9	—	1.434
7.	adverbs: degree		38.5	43.6	18.0	—	—	1.615
8.	present continuous		43.5	28.2	17.9	7.7	2.6	1.654
9.	future: *will*		39.4	34.2	18.4	5.3	2.6	1.723
10.	adjectives: comp. & super		33.3	35.9	25.6	5.1	—	1.731
14.	past continuous		40.5	24.3	16.2	10.8	8.1	1.972
18.	mass—count		23.7	36.9	23 7	7.9	7.9	2.197
43.	gerunds		2.6	12.8	12.8	33.4	28.4	3.705
44.	advanced tags		—	10.3	23.1	23.1	43.6	3.820
45.	cleft sentences		—	10.3	18.0	28.2	43.6	3.846

greater understanding of the functional load concept as evidenced by non-ESL educators' choice of "degree of adverbs" over the "degree of adjectives" (items 7 and 10) where the heavier functional load of adjectives is usually agreed on.

Since teachers exhibit a persuasive utilization of structural continuous and/or contiguous sequencing, it is presumed that teacher training and experience equip the ESL teachers with valuable and unique insights into language learning.

Figure 3: Structure Level Occurrences in Leading ESL Textbook Series

	STRUCTURES	EFT	E9	MAE	LES	OAE	AE
1.	*be* + complement She*'s* in class.	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.	present continuous They*'re baking* a cake.	1	2	1	2	1	2
3.	nouns: plural formation book*s*; pencil*s*; box*es*	1,3	1	1	1	2	1
4.	commands *Open* the book.	1	1,3	2	1	1	1
5.	pronominalization *I* have a book. Give *it* to him.	1,2	1,2,3	1,2	1,3,5	1	1
6.	habitual present We usually *play* the piano.	1	1,2	1	1	1	2
7.	simple past She *played* the tuba.	1	1,2	1	2	1	2,3
8.	WH-words and questions. *What* is he doing?	1	1,2	1,2	2	1,2	1
9.	future: will *She'll* go home later.	2	1,3	2,3		1,4,5	4
10.	adjective:comparative & superlative She's *shorter than* Tom. She's *the shortest* in the class.	2	2,3,4	2	3	3,4,5	4
11.	mass—count I need *a few* books and *some* ink.	1	1,2,3	2	3,4	3	1,3
12.	simple modals We *can* drive.	2	1,4	3,4	3	2,3	3,4
13.	order of adverbials She *usually* takes him *home every morning*.	1	2,3	3	3	2,3	3
14.	irregular verbs: past and past participle He *sold* the book. He has *sold* the book.	2,3	3	2	2,3,4	1,2,3,4,5	3
15.	connected statements Mary is pretty *and* Helen is, *too*.	1,2	3,4,5	4	4		1,2,5
16.	adverbs: degree She reads *faster* than John.	2,4	1,5	2	3		4
17.	past continuous We *were playing* the piano.	3	2	2	2		3

(cont.)

EFT	*English for Today*	LES	*Lado English Series*
E9	*English 900*	OAE	*Orientation in American English*
MAE	*Modern American English*	AE	*American English*

	STRUCTURES	EFT	E9	MAE	LES	OAE	AE
18.	adjectives: equality and intensity He's *as tall as* Mary. He's *too tall* for the sports car.	2	2,3	5	3	4	4,5
19.	real conditional *If it rains, I'll go.*	2,3	2,3,4	4	5	4,5	5
20.	request variations *Would you please* close the door?	2	3,4,5	5,	1,4		5
21.	present perfect *I've played* the flute for 5 years.	2	2,3	2	3	3	3
22.	frequent two-word verbs *Put on* your clothes.	1,3	1,2,3,5	2,3	4,	1,2,3	
23.	present perfect continuous *I've been living* in NY for 5 years.	2		3	5		3
24.	infinitive She's too tired *to go* to the movies.	2, 3, 5	1,2,3,4,5	3	3,4	2,3,4	5
25.	simple passives *I'm invited* to the wedding.	2	1,3,4,5	3	3	2	5
26.	lexical derivational contrasts She *swims rapidly*. She's a rapid swimmer	2					4
27.	relative pronouns The book *which* you saw is old.	2,3,4	2,4	2,3	4	4,5	4
28.	verbal variations I like *swimming* in the summer. *to swim*		4	5	4		5
29.	adverbial expressions *Since* he's here, ask him.	4	1,2	2,5	5		5
30.	simple reported speech John *says* that he's tired.	3	1,4,5	2,4	4		5
31.	adjective clause reduction The boy *with the blond hair* . . . The *blond-haired* boy.	5		5	4	5	4
32.	unreal conditional If I *were* rich, I'd buy a house.	2,3		4	5	4	5
33.	transition words I don't speak English well; *therefore* . . .	4	2,3,5	5	4,5	5	5
34.	complex modals She *had* to go by train.	3	1,2,3,4,5	3,4	3,	4,5	4
35.	negative variations I *don't* like to talk in a movie. I like *not* to talk in a movie.	2	5	4			5
36.	pre-nominal order *Both the last two difficult geometry* lessons.	4	2,3	3	5	4,5	
37.	causatives I must *have* the optometrist examine my eyes.		4		5	3	5
38.	past perfect After John *had shopped* three hours . . .	3	5	2	3		
39.	advanced tags She could've danced all night, *couldn't she have?*	5		4			
40.	double comparatives The *longer* I wait, the *more impatient* I get.						
41.	gerunds I regretted *my seeing* you there.	4	2,3,4,5	4	4	5	5
42.	complex reported speech and noun clauses He *said* that he *had been* to Paris.	4	2,5	3,4	4		5
43.	cleft sentences *It's obvious that Tom is happy.*	4			4		5
44.	uninflected verbs in noun clause He demands that John *close* the door.						5
45.	complex passives I *was given* an apple *by the teacher.*	3	1	3	3	2	5

EFT	*English for Today*	LES	*Lado English Series*
E9	*English 900*	OAE	*Orientation in American English*
MAE	*Modern American English*	AE	*American English*

Figure 3 shows that ESL teachers are not unduly influenced by existing textbook series. A great deal of disparity is obvious in studying this chart. Of the six series analyzed, there is very little correlation shown between ESL teacher consensus and the structural content of these texts. The listing shows that the

very beginning structures receive initial attention in most of the textbook series and that these beginning structures correlate significantly with the choices of ESL teachers. Beyond this beginning level, correlation is fragmentary.

The textbook analyses are limited only to current textbooks which purport to cover the language learning continuum, that is, textbook series that range, as in the case in a language learning syllabus, from very beginning to very advanced. The series analyzed were: (1) *English for Today* (six book series), McGraw-Hill; (2) *English 900* (five book series), Collier Macmillan; (3) *Modern American English* (six book series), Regents; (4) *Lado English Series* (five book series), Regents; (5) *Orientation in American English* (five book series), Institute of Modern Languages; (6) *American English* (four book series), The Center for Curriculum Development.

After carefully screening each series to find the entry of each structural item, it was entered into the five-level learning continuum to compare with the questionnaire results. A simple prorating procedure was used by counting the total number of chapters and subtracting the review chapters. The total number of chapters throughout the series was then divided by five to find out the exact placement of a structure in the series which correlated with our learning continuum.

The first level number in each column of Figure 3 designates the initial place of entry. Subsequent level numbers indicate continuous re-entries which were always instances of expansion of the same underlying grammatical rule. A solitary level number shows a discontinuous entry which is not further expanded later in the series.

The information from this study leads to various considerations. It focuses on a language learning spectrum as viewed by the ESL teacher. It strongly suggests that ESL teachers show consensus of judgment, greater specificity, and independent thinking in designating the placement of a language stucture on a learning spectrum. Moreover, existing language materials do not always represent teacher preferences or sequences.

In comparison with non-ESL educators of equivalent background, this research has clarified that ESL training and experience are apparent factors that influence the entry and the sequence of grammatical structures.

In conclusion, then, teachers and materials writers would do well to acknowledge the distinction between language acquisition and language learning pointed out earlier in this paper. The "natural" sequences projected by researchers relate more to language acquisition than they seem to relate to language learning (by formal instruction). Until clearer link-up between language acquisition and learning is established (if indeed there is such a link-up), teachers and materials writers would probably do well to rely on their collective expertise in projecting language learning sequences to be included in a syllabus.

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PAPER THREE

Using Debate in ESOL

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Introduction

In order to best explain what the use of debate accomplishes, we should first like to outline briefly the program in which we began using it.

For several years prior to 1969 the English department of the University of Wyoming (the only four-year school in the state) had tried to meet the needs of the non-native speaker by setting aside certain sections of its regular freshman composition course of such students. However, it was apparent that such an arrangement had many shortcomings, both for the students and for the instructors (the matter of grades, for example). Beginning in 1969, a change was effected and these sections were retitled "English for Non-native Speakers." These classes meet three times a week (with an additional one hour of lab required for some students) and carry three hours credit for each of two semesters. This credit substitutes for the regular freshman composition courses to fulfill graduation requirements which stipulate six hours of freshman composition with a grade of C or above in each course.

The first semester course is devoted primarily to speech fluency and aural comprehension. In addition to the debate activities which will be explained, there are also short speeches and aural comprehension exercises. These *precede* the debate unit and lay the foundation for the actual debating.

The second semester course emphasizes reading and writing. The reading selections are usually taken from American literature. The writing assignments progress from paragraph writing to essay writing to a final paper which involves research and analysis.

This two-semester course is expected to include: (1) English instruction for non-native speakers; but (2) with some equivalency to the regular freshman composition courses, i.e. expository writing, introduction to literary types; (3) cultural orientation; and (4) study skills, since the students are full-time students in an academic discipline.

Technique

The program begins with general reading assignments designed to familiarize students with working vocabulary. Next they read about the nature of debate and how to form the affirmative and the negative cases. Then they study sample debate cases for illustrative purposes.

In the process of working through the reading materials, there are two or three written examinations concerning the principles, the terms, and how to set up the cases. This testing gives us an opportunity to introduce students to various kinds of test questions and to talk with them about how to take examinations.

After the students begin to understand what debating is all about, they are asked to decide what topic they would like to debate. *They* choose the topics. All proposals come from within the class, but the teacher has veto power. Topics chosen have included:

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Resolved: That capital punishment be abolished.
Resolved: That abortion be legalized in the U.S.
Resolved: That the legal voting age should be reduced to eighteen.
Resolved: That the U.S. should withdraw its military forces from Vietnam.
Resolved: That the United Nations should have a permanent peace-keeping force.
Resolved: That the United Nations should supervise and control the production of crude oil.

Students also choose the side they wish to defend, affirmative or negative.

At the end of this first step of the program, students know debate terms, how to set up a debate (theoretically, at least), their own particular debate subjects, their commitment to defend either the affirmative or negative, the identity of their teammates, and their opponents.

The next step is preparation of the debate cases. This involves techniques such as notetaking, dealing with direct and indirect quotations, summarizing, and preparing a bibliography. With this procedure students are learning the techniques involved in research which will help them not only in assembling the needed ammunition for the defense of their side in the debate, but also in research work in future phases of their academic careers (i.e., gathering material for reports and term papers) and beyond. During the time the students are doing their research, the teams are meeting frequently to prepare their cases. The teams are deciding which kind of case is most appropriate and, having decided on the underlying strategy, are outlining their presentations.

Although the focus of classroom activities is on preparation for the debate, the material presented in class is applicable to a broader spectrum. This material includes outlining, the importance of defining terms, and the various methods of rhetorical development. For example, cause and effect play an important role in determining the adequacy of the benefits section of a traditional case (needs, plan, benefits). Comparison and contrast are at work most obviously in a comparative advantage or counter-plan case. The students need to study not only the best method of developing their own case but the other methods of development which their classmates will present. This is essential as they must be able to follow the opposition's arguments in order to refute them successfully and because they will also be serving as judges in debates between other teams. These same methods of development are, of course, the ones used by their professors in other classes when they lecture, and the application of various developmental methods to the students' other written work is obvious.

The concept of the use of supporting details—or in debate terms, supportive evidence—is one of the most important concepts in the study of English rhetoric. No matter what method of development the speaker or writer uses, the effectiveness is considerably reduced if it lacks solid supportive evidence. Students in this program become very conscious of the absolute necessity for the use of good supporting details and authority. It is stressed when they undertake notetaking; it is stressed during the development-of-the-case stage; it is again stressed during the actual presentation of the debate; and its effectiveness will be considered in the judging of the debate. Again, the carryover of the use of examples and supportive detail into their other written English work is obvious.

The preparation for the debate involves a close look at other English areas in addition to those already mentioned. The students need to consider negation in English. The use of a negative in an utterance in the debate may change the entire meaning of the sentence; there are syntactic consequences of using negative words at the beginning of an utterance; the semantic elements which at first glance don't look negative but really are, functionally (i.e., "denies" and "avoided" and even "too").

The uses and consequences of relativization and complementation are important, and the myriad of things that happen when you go from direct address to indirect address (pronominalization changes, tense changes, adverbial changes) need attention. The structures considered aren't highly sequenced, but what the students lose in the absence of sequencing, they gain because what they are learning is directly applicable to their project, the debate.

One thing more happens before an actual debate begins. One or two periods before their debate, the teams must hand in a list of special terms they will be using. In a debate on capital punishment such terms would include "capital punishment" itself, the "federal government," the "death penalty", etc. This allows the rest of the class an opportunity to study the vocabulary before the debate. Sometimes the teams also hand in a list of the issues for their debate. This requirement depends on the level of the class. If the instructors believe that the judges will be able to pick out the issues with little difficulty, they do not ask for the list ahead of time. If they anticipate some difficulty, teams are asked for them. Again, this gives the rest of the class some guidelines for listening and judging critically. The third thing that each team hands in prior to the debate itself is its bibliography. All three of these—the terms, the issues (if required), and the bibliography—are prepared by the teams; they are not individual assignments.

The debates themselves are conducted with a

format which is a bit different from that used in regular university debates. First, there are often three people on a team instead of two. More students can participate at a time this way, and students seem to prefer working in teams of threes better than teams of twos. Additionally, it seems that three people doing research obtain more pertinent material than two!

Another variation from regular debate procedure is the time differential. Regular debate teams allow ten minutes per person for constructive speeches and five minutes per person for rebuttal speeches. The debates in English for Non-native Speakers classes run seven minutes per person for constructive speeches and four minutes for rebuttals. There is a time-keeper in the back of the room who has cards numbering from *seven* to *one-half*, to *stop*. This time-keeper is one of the students, usually a volunteer. With this method debaters know exactly how much time they have left. (Incidentally, when it dawns on students that they are responsible for seven whole minutes and then for another four as well, there is usually a time set aside for panic. Once they get going, however, the common complaint is that they don't have enough time, and convincing them to stop when the timekeeper says to do so is sometimes a major undertaking.)

While the debate among the four or six members of the class is going on in front of the room, the rest of the class is not idle. They are the judges. They have before them two types of ballots which they are expected to complete, and to do that requires a good deal of careful concentration and critical listening. The students have to be able to pick out the issues (if they have not been provided previously) and decide which team won on each issue. They have to judge each debater's ability and not only give a numerical evaluation but also a written one. They have to decide which team won the debate and why.

Meanwhile, the teacher is also judging, but with more emphasis on the English ability of the participants than on the thundering rebuttal just delivered by the second negative. Of course, the teacher is aware of that, too, especially in terms of how the arguments are organized.

The constructive speeches for a debate take one class period. The next is devoted to the rebuttals. The first ten minutes of this class period are devoted to a review for each team (five minutes per team). There is a restatement of the issues but no new material is to be introduced. The rebuttal speeches themselves are not as long as the constructive speeches, four minutes as opposed to seven, so that there is class time left over when the official part of the debate is over. Here again, there is a variance from traditional debate procedure. The "debate" goes on (which is much easier than trying to stop it, anyway), although it continues in a more informal fashion.

First, the members of the two teams are allowed to ask direct questions of each other. Then, after each team member has had at least one chance to ask and be answered, the debate is thrown open to the floor, and any student may ask a question. Again, there are restrictions. The question must be directed to a specific person, not just to a team in general, and there is a time limit placed on the answer, usually just a few minutes.

This part of the debate activity continues until the end of the class period (and has been known to continue for quite a while after that—in the student union).

Constructive speeches have taken one entire period. Review rebuttals and class participation have taken the next. The following days are devoted to follow-up. The results from both the judges' sheets and the teachers' ballots are gone over. The averages of the scores of the judges are tabulated and the student is given a record of all comments given him. These comments are typed and the sources are not revealed. The debater also receives a team evaluation revealing how many judges thought the team won, and how many thought it lost, and why. Finally, the student is given the ballot filled out by the teacher, with the English evaluation and comments.

The final part of the follow-up involves three things: work on pronounciation and intonation problems that have arisen in the course of the debate; worksheets containing actual utterances coming out of the debate which usually deal with structural problems, idioms, prepositions, etc; and a discussion of the debate in general. What was good? What could have been done better? In what way?

Purposes of the ESOL debate program

The debate program is designed to fulfill three main purposes: (1) to reinforce previous learning, (2) present new material for learning, and (3) provide foundations for later learning.

I. Reinforce previous learning—All our students have had previous English training of some kind. Until recently the ability levels varied greatly, from advanced students to functional non-speakers. However, we have now instituted a TOEFL requirement for admission which has eliminated the functional non-speaker. Thus we have students who have had some experience in English. Nevertheless, we have found that most students are weakest in oral English. Given enough time in which to complete a specific assignment, they can read and write with some degree of proficiency, but they have had little prac-

tice and practically no instruction in speaking and listening. The reading done in the debate book and in preparing a case reinforces already learned skills of reading from left to right, top to bottom, etc. and it also allows the student to work in a familiar area, that of the written word. Likewise, the writing done, though minimal and limited primarily to note-taking, reinforces the production of English written symbols and, again, provides a kind of security by duplicating previous experience.

Basic grammer, such as verb-subject agreement, proper use of articles, etc., is reviewed in class and is encountered and reinforced in the reading and writing. The follow-up routines correct individual mistakes and provide further reinforcement for the rest of the class.

II. Introduce new material for learning—The debate activities involve all four basic skills—reading, writing (though only to a limited degree), speaking, and listening.

The writing, which is used least, is related primarily to note-taking. This process may be an entirely new experience and certainly is a skill which can be used in the students' other classes. In addition, it has carry-over value to note-taking from the oral presentations of class lectures. The other use of writing, the judging sheets, involves a method similar to dictation; the student doing the judging must write down the issues, as quickly as possible, as the debaters deliver them.

The use of debate topics allows for a variety of reading skills and materials to be introduced. To begin with, there is textbook reading in the initial assignments. These readings are discussed in class, and it is possible to devote class time to "how to read a textbook." The research for the preparation of the case involves reading from books, magazines, newspapers, journals, and official documents. Some of these sources are very technical (the government documents some students read when preparing a case on foreign aid, for example). Others are very informal (the articles from the university newspaper on lowering the voting age, for example). Such readings introduce the student to "English as it is really written," rather than the somewhat artificial English found in many ESL texts.

A related area is vocabulary study. The widespread topical reading extends the student's vocabulary. Similarly the classwork on vocabulary which precedes and follows each debate offers an opportunity for vocabulary building.

The debate activities also provide an opportunity to work with listening skills. In the early assignments, the student encounters the usual classroom listening situation in which the teacher discusses the assigned reading material. However, the more important listening activity comes during the judging of the debate. The task here is similar to what Eugene A. Nida calls "Selective Listening" (Nida, 1965) though on a more advanced level. As Nida says, "The average person simply doesn't know where to begin listening." Thus the listeners need some framework which allows them to select certain features and listen concentratedly for and to them (Nida, 1965). The students who are debating must listen for their opponents' strategy; they must identify issues and contentions and be able to differentiate between them. However, since they are familiar with the problem being debated, they can *anticipate* these matters. The students serving as judges benefit most from this listening process. They have a well-defined framework in which to listen (the traditional 3-stock-issue case). The listeners are well acquainted with the framework by the time of the debate. Thus they can listen for certain material (issues, etc.) which they then transfer to paper so that we can evaluate the accuracy with which they are listening. (This introduces another study skill—note-taking in class and lectures.) These controlled listening experiences provide the student with a means of practice in a situation which is stimulating, unlike the usual language-lab aural comprehension exercise dealing with information which the intermediate or advanced student probably already knows.

The area of speaking is of prime concern in this unit. We have found that most of our students come to us with very little speaking practice. Consequently they have difficulty being understood and, as a result, are often very reticent to speak, especially in English class, the very place where they should be gaining fluency. Patterned dialogues are useful with beginning students, but less useful with the intermediate and advanced students. These students need to be determining their own patterns relevant to the situation. As Wilga Rivers says, they need "autonomous interaction" (Rivers, 1972). The use of short speeches helps here because it provides a frame within which the student can speak. However, the tendency is for the student to write and then read or memorize the speech. The resulting speech often is not very authentic speaking activity.

The debate, however, solves some of these problems. It does provide a framework within which the student must speak. They know beforehand what the topic is and what the assignment is (to present the plan, attack the benefits, etc.). *But* they cannot prepare a written or memorized speech beforehand because they don't know what "tack" the opposition will take. Consequently, they are forced into a situation where they must speak more or less spontaneously. And certainly this is the goal to be sought, to have the student progress to the point where he or

she can communicate orally without first preplanning every utterance.

What we have found, and what originally led us to be so enthusiastic about the use of debate as a teaching method, is that students become so involved in the debate that they forget to be afraid, self-conscious, halting. They simply speak English. And the results are surprisingly good. In other speaking situations, students often try to frame a perfect utterance before speaking and do double-translation with its resulting time-lag and artificiality. In the debate, they become so eager to speak and to express their ideas that fluency is no longer a problem. Once having realized that they *can* speak, they lose much of their reticence.

In addition, the debate program affords the students opportunities (1) to adapt their language to variations in formality, role-relationship, and province of discourse and (2) to practice the use of such features of the language as intonation, pause fillers, facial expression, and gestures--opportunities the advanced students need in order to gain communicative competence, according to Ronald V. White (White, 1973).

The "mechanical" problems of speaking (grammer, syntax, etc.) are handled in the follow-up worksheet after each debate. Any problems of pronounciation and intonation are also dealt with then or, in the case of some students, on an individual basis in the language lab period.

In the course of the debate unit, we teach most of the study skills that Richard Yorkey recommends (Yorkey, 1970). These include notetaking, library work, textbook reading, skimming, and outlining.

III. Provide foundations for later learning—In the second semester course, all the skills learned and used in the debate activities are utilized. Since this second course is devoted primarily to reading and writing, the speaking fluency and aural comprehension are not emphasized, but they continue to be important concerns as the students participate in class discussions.

The methods of organization and argumentation learned in the debate are used in the writing activities, particularly in writing paragraphs and essays relating to the literature. The methods of research, notetaking, and documentation learned in the debate activities are utilized in the preparation of a long paper which involves research and analysis.

In addition to the learning of language skills, there are other areas in which the students become involved. The obvious one is that the students learn something about the problems being debated. Since these problems are often of current national and international concern (pollution, U.S. economic aid, capital punishment, U.N. military force, etc.), the students also become involved in current issues. Our students also become involved in regular campus debate activities. Our debate coach and debate team have been helpful in providing demonstration debates, and our students have learned that there *is* a University debate team. Each year we attend at least one round of a tournament being held on campus. Recently some of our students went to hear two politicians "debate" on campus—and come back to report, "Those guys didn't follow good debate practices!"

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PAPER FOUR

Non-Verbal Films For Discussion

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While labor and management are squaring off at each other on "Blue Monday," ESL students and their teachers regularly encounter similar difficulties on what I call "Blank Monday." "Blank" as in stare, expression, and mind.

Whereas blue-collar workers spend *their* weekends escaping from the assembly lines into their TV screens, gardens, or hobbies, ESL students pass *their* free time by escaping from English into their native languages. The blank stares, expressions, and minds are caused in part by their not having used English from Friday afternoon to Monday morning.

The "Blank Monday" phenomenon has given rise at our institution to the development of a film/discussion class to provide a unique conversation experience with which to start the week. Our approach to conversation revolves around the integration of the following elements: (1) thought-provoking non-verbal films, which deal with universal human issues, serve as a shared experience for all the students, and contain no language barrier in themselves; (2) a small-group discussion format which approximates the classroom situation in which many of the students, both undergraduates and graduates, will find themselves once they have completed their English language training; (3) training in communication skills which will benefit the students in their ESL classes and throughout their sojourn in this country; (4) an effective intercultural communication experience.

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Non-verbal films

The non-verbal nature of the films empolyed in this class is central to the whole process of discussion. They have neither narration nor dialogue and are, therefore, totally free of aural comprehension problems. The students can watch and readily understand them; the challenge is for them to discuss the films in English.

The 26 films listed at the end of this paper average ten minutes in length, and the longest is 22 minutes and the shortest, four. They have sound-tracks composed of music and other sound effects. The subject matter of the films is diverse and intellectually challenging, as well as of concern to people from around the world. Generally classified under "film as art" in film catalogues, they deal with values clarification and decision-making regarding such relevant topics as pollution, the role of man and society in a world of changing values, evolution, interpersonal relationships, love and freedom, peace and war. The majority of the films are produced in the U.S., although there are a number of excellent ones from Canada, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria.

Small group format

The films provide the content for stimulating discussions and the small-group format, with a maximum of six persons per group, puts most students at ease and allows them ample opportunity to speak in a relaxed atmosphere. The groups are culturally and proficiency-wise, heterogeneous. The orientation of

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the groups is toward an exchange of ideas in a problem-solving team approach, and away from anything resembling a debate. The intention is to promote an exchange of ideas and opinions in which the students are asked to explain and expand as much as possible. No attempt is made to argue with an opinion, but reasons are asked for in an attempt to make the student think in English and to speak spontaneously. Proficiency level is the greatest determiner of how well students can do this. Since each group consists of a cross section of proficiency levels from high-advanced to low-intermediate, consideration is given for different individuals' abilities.

Discussion skills

In addition to language ability, persons from other cultures also need to understand something of the dynamics of group interaction to feel comfortable and perform well in a discussion setting. They need to know what they can do and what they can't do. In other words, they need to know how to "act" in a group discussion in this country. The democratic nature of discussion groups in an educational context is a difficult phenomenon for persons of some cultures to master, especially if this is a totally new experience for them.

The challenge here is to provide the students with effective discussion skills which will (1) help them to understand the nature of a discussion group as perceived and practiced in this country, (2) enable them to improve their language ability through discussion with their peers, and (3) serve them well during the rest of their sojourn in this country, particularly in group situations of an educational nature.

Discussion leaders are selected from among the advanced students and are given training in the identification and use of a number of communication skills: asking for and giving information, asking for and giving clarifications, paraphrasing, and summarizing. Specific leadership skills are also introduced: methods of asking and fielding questions, gate keeping, setting standards, reaching compromises, and supporting and encouraging group members.

The leaders then use these skills in their groups and serve as models which the rest of the students follow. The leaders (selected from the advanced sections) are concerned primarily with group maintenance. The other members of the group share the responsibility for preparing, participating, and generally adhering to the guidelines for the class.

Intercultural communication

The last of the four components of the film/discussion class is the intercultural communication experience. The groups normally consist of persons from four or more different cultures and therefore provide potential for much cross-cultural interaction. This interaction in a relaxed and supportive environment generally leads to an awareness and some understanding of the values and beliefs of the members of the group and, to some degree, of the cultures they represent. This awareness and understanding contributes to an easier adjustment to the different values, beliefs, and assumptions with which the students are confronted in their new surroundings. (I refer the reader to the excellent readings contained in volumes 1, 2, and 3 of *Readings in Intercultural Communications*, edited by David Hoopes of the Intercultural Communications Network, as well as Samovar and Porter's anthology *Intercultural Communications: A Reader.*)

The four preceding components comprise the film/discussion class. The role of the instructor will be mentioned later. Now we will look at a day in the life of this class, then we will move on to guidelines for the class, then to the list of titles, and finally to some remarks on directions for the future.

Leaders' meeting

Currently our intensive ESL program has 90 students who, for the purposes of this class, are divided into 15 groups of six students each. The leader for each group serves in this capacity for three weeks. Then the groups are reshuffled and new leaders are appointed. Two instructors break the 15 leaders into two groups of seven and eight. The leaders' meetings are weekly and last for approximately two hours. They include a discussion of guidelines for conducting discussions and the communications skills to be emphasized, problems the leaders anticipate (if this is their first week) or problems they had the previous week (such as, how to deal with students who attempt to dominate the group, how to bring in timid students, or how to deal with students who use their native language in class), and a screening of the film and discussion of its content and meaning. Throughout the meeting the instructors try to use the skills being emphasized as often as possible; they point out their use of the skills in a wrap-up at the end. One technique regularly used in these meetings is to turn the leadership of the meeting over to the students during the discussion of the film and to give the leaders feed-back on their handling of the group at the end of the meeting.

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Film/Discussion class meeting

The two-hour class meets weekly on Mondays after lunch, with all students participating except the beginning section. The first 15 minutes are taken up with a screening of the film to be discussed. This is the second time the students see the film, for it is screened at the end of class the previous week; it is the third time the leaders see the film for they also see it during the leaders' meeting. In addition to seeing the film the previous week, the students are given a one-page hand-out at that time. This consists of a summary of the film, a possible interpretation of the film, and some questions for discussion. The students are instructed to study the hand-out, to think about the film during the week, and to write out any additional questions they may have about the film.

Following the screening of the film at the beginning of the class, the students break into their assigned groups to discuss the film for an hour and 20 minutes. It is recommended but not required that the discussion begin with the members of the group contributing to a narration of the story line of the film, with attention to as many details as possible. This gives people a chance to recall the film and to use the vocabulary in the summary.

Each of the participants then has the chance to pose questions to the group. The leaders attempt to field and to redirect questions and may ask questions of their own and from the hand-out. By using the skills emphasized in the leaders' meeting and with their attention to group maintenance, the leaders attempt to give everyone equal time in the discussion. They try to be sensitive to the interest level of the members in the discussion so that once the members of the group have no further questions about the film, and once everyone has been given the chance to express and to expand on their ideas, the leader attempts to turn the discussion to related issues, as time allows. This varies from group to group, for some never finish discussing the film, and others finish quickly and move on to other subjects.

With 20 minutes remaining, the groups adjourn and the class reconvenes. Depending on the film and the number of general announcements to be made, the instructors use this time to discuss their views of the film and its relation to other films which have been seen during the semester. The final ten minutes of the class are devoted to a screening of the film to be discussed the following week and the students pick up the hand-out with the summary, interpretation, and questions as they leave class.

Hundreds of films have been previewed by the writer and the attached 26 have been selected for use in the class. This enables us to have enough films to use two different sets during consecutive semesters. Thus, students do not see the same films each semester.

Instructor's role

In addition to previewing new films, conducting the leaders' meetings and modeling the leadership skills being emphasized, the instructor also observes the leaders and their groups during the class meetings. While observing, the instructor takes attendance and makes notes on the skills the leader uses so that the leaders may be given feed-back on their progress. Thus, the role of the instructor is supportive and stimulative at the same time. The instructor's concerns are that oral communication be the primary focus and that all students have the opportunity to speak and participate as fully as possible.

Samples of materials distributed to the students at the beginning of the semester and discussed during the first class follow.

Evaluation

The students are asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of each semester. They are asked to rank order the films, tell what they like best and least about the class, and make suggestions to improve it. As a result of this evaluation, five of the original films have been replaced, the class has been lengthened to its present two hours, and the beginning level students are no longer included in the discussion groups. Instead, they are drilled on structures and idioms which can be illustrated from the films as well as a narration of the story line.

Conclusion

While our program chooses to incorporate nonverbal films into its curriculum in the manner outlined above, and to integrate the film/discussion class into it by going through the hand-outs in aural/oral classes and vocabulary and reading classes, (as well as including them on tape in the language laboratory), teachers may wish to use this medium in a much more limited manner. The above has worked well in our program but any number of film program modifications can be made to take advantage of this absorbing, flexible medium.

Guidelines on Participating in Discussion

The Summary Page

Please study the summary page which you will receive the week before you discuss each film. Give some time during the week to your ideas on the film. Write down any questions you may have about the film.

Watching the film:

Please pay close attention to the film and do not distract the rest of the class by talking during the film. The first time you see it, look for the general meaning; the second time look for the answers to your questions about it.

The Discussion:

Please cooperate by listening to instructions and by helping to begin the discussion as soon as possible so that we can use our time constructively.

Please help your discussion leader in the following ways: try to stay with the questions; speak loudly enough so that everyone in your group can hear you; speak clearly and carefully so that people from different countries can understand you; try to help the members of your group when they are looking for words; let only one person speak at a time; ask questions if you do not understand what someone says; pay attention to each member of your group when he or she is speaking; try to use the words on the summary page in the discussion and any appropriate words that you have learned.

Most important of all, please remember that the purposes of this class are *conversation* and *thinking in English*. Everyone is nervous about speaking in English and making mistakes; please help each other and the result will be an interesting and stimulating discussion.

Guidelines on conducting discussions

A discussion leader's principal concern should be to stimulate conversation and to involve each member of the group in an open exchange of ideas. The leader should try to make each participant feel comfortable and encourage the members to express their ideas. Here are a number of suggestions which will help you. NAMES. . .Before you begin your discussion review the names of all the members of your group. You want each person in the group to know everyone's name. THE TYPES OF QUESTIONS THAT YOU ASK. . .Try to ask questions which will give the members of your group an opportunity to express their ideas. In other words, try to avoid questions which the participants can answer with a simple "yes" or "no." If a student does give a "yes" or "no" answer, ask the student "why."

How to Ask Questions. . .Always try to address your questions to the whole group and wait a few seconds before you ask a certain person to answer it. This will keep everyone in the group alert and ready to answer questions.

Alternating Questions. . .Try to address each question to a different member of the group. In other words, don't always ask the same person, and don't follow a certain order or go from one person to the next.

Helping the Members of Your Group. . .If you ask a student a question and he or she tries to answer it but has difficulty looking for a word, give encouragement by supplying a few words which you think will help. If you ask a student a question and he or she *doesn't* try to answer it, ascertain whether or not the question was understood. If it was *not* understood, please try to rephrase it or to change it so that the student *does* understand.

Answering questions from the group. . .If one of the members of the group asks a question, try to redirect the question, first by repeating it, and then by asking one or more people to answer it.

The Flow of Conversation. . .If you ask a question which the people in the group appear to really want to answer and discuss, let the conversation flow freely from that answer. Ask people to respond to each other. Watch their faces: if student A says something and student B responds with a head shake, a face, or a change of posture, when student A has finished speaking, ask student B how he or she feels about the same question. Does he or she agree or disagree, and why?

Leader as Participant. . .In addition to asking questions and trying to help the members of your group, you, as leader, should also feel free to express your own ideas and to answer questions when you wish. Be-

cause of your participation in the discussion leaders' session you will have a good idea of the different interpretations which will be possible for each film. Leaders should share some of these ideas with their groups and ask the members of the group to react to them. To stimulate discussion it is often helpful to take a position which is the opposite of the one most people accept.

Encouraging Everyone to Participate. . . Some people need more encouragement than others. In many cases these will be the people from the intermediate sections who lack confidence and practice in trying to express themselves. You can help them by speaking clearly and by asking questions which are relatively short and easy. Don't let them remain silent. Ask them to put together at least a noun and a verb if they can't give you a complete sentence to express their idea. Always give them encouragement for effort. Try to make them feel good about their contribution to the discussion. Try to get them to ask questions.

Sample of Student Handout

FILM: "HYPOTHESE BETA"

Part I: Summary

The holes in a computer card become a society. An alarm-like impulse from the computer passes through the holes periodically.

One of the holes begins to yawn, stretch, scratch himself, and then starts pacing back and forth. He talks to a girl in the row above his, and she blushes. He tries to change places with another hole, who refuses. He hollers at the other hole, who reports him to the leader. The leader comes down, yells at the offender, and makes him go back to his original position.

The troublesome hole refuses to stay in his place and starts laughing and playing with the other holes. The leader is called again, and he and the others have to search for the rebel and chain him in his place. The prisoner breaks his chains and escapes, causing the rejection of the card by the computer, and the explosion or destruction of the system.

Part II: Interpretation

The film is very vague and very symbolic. Discussions of the film tend to take two opposing sides. One group believes the society is too strict, too oppressive, and that the rebel is simply trying to express himself and his needs for friendship, humor, and love. When the society imposes its will on him and forces him to stay in one place all the time, he rebels and causes his own destruction and that of the society.

Other people see him as a real troublemaker who must be punished to protect the society. They believe he wants to cause trouble and destruction and that society must protect its other members from him.

Part III: Questions for Discussion

What kind of person is the rebel? Why?
What does the rebel relate to the other people in this society?
How do they see him?
Why does he act they way he does?
Do you think he wants to destroy the society? Why?
What is the purpose of society? Does man serve society or does society serve man?
How does society change?

The Film List

The following films have all been used in the film/discussion class, some more successfully than others. Some eventually will be replaced when better films are available to replace them. However, each provides sufficient stimulus to warrant its continued use, although the issues involved may become less engaging.

"BAGGAGE"—ACI Productions, 22 min., b/w, 1969.

Through the striking and diverse architectural setting of San Francisco, Mamako carries her "baggage," an allegorical piece of luggage representing the burden of conscience and man's struggle to free himself from psychological, cultural, emotional restrictions.

"BLESSINGS OF LOVE"—MacMillan Films, 9 min., color, 1972.

With delicate thin-line animation and soft background music, this film traces a man and woman's relationship from their first meeting through their marriage and aging to their deaths.

"BOOMSVILLE"—National Film Board of Canada, 11 min., color, 1970.

An animated view of the growth of cities. This film recreates man's interaction with his surroundings, tracing, step by step, the process by which man took a virgin land and made of it a frantic congested "boomsville." Film ends with man on another planet, where the whole process is beginning again.

"A CHAIRY TALE"—International Film Bureau, 10 min., b/w, 1957.

A pantomime-ballet about a youth and a chair that refuses to be sat upon until it has been properly appreciated.

"CLAY (ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES)"—Contemporary Films, 8 min., b/w, nd.

A visual variation on Darwin, created by Eliot Noyes, Jr., using three-dimensional forms. Beginning with simple graphic motions on a clay "sea," forms of life emerge which then play, devour one another and metamorphose into several animals, climaxing in the creation of man himself.

"THE DAISY"—Film Center, 6 min., color, 1965.

A humorous and ironical story of a daisy which could not be destroyed by a person insensitive to beauty.

"THE END OF ONE"—Learning Corporation, 7 min., color, 1970.

The seagulls scavenge for food from a huge garbage dump. Nearby a lone, frail gull limps along a polluted stretch of beach, stumbling, dying. His fellows continue their raucous competition, uncaring. Suggests a death-knell for our environment. An allegory on greed.

"EVOLUTION"—National Film Board of Canada Learning Corp., 11 min., color, 1972.

How life began on earth, from one-celled amoebae to homosapiens, is told by film animator Michael Mills. The film follows a wide range of little imaginary creatures as they appear on the evolutionary scene. They mix, match, and multiply when not fighting to stay alive by keeping out of the way of bigger hungrier creatures.

"A FABLE"—Xerox, 19 min., color, 1972.

Marcel Marceau as a man who builds a wall around his bit of paradise only to discover that his paradise has become a prison. Excellent mime.

"HELP! MY SNOWMAN'S BURNING DOWN"—Contemporary Films, 10 min., color, 1964.

A man, fully attired in a business suit, sits in a bathtub in an unenclosed bathroom in New York City Harbor. The film unravels a succession of surrealistic, perhaps symbolic, and certainly funny episodes based on totally impossible circumstances.

"HOPSCOTCH"—Churchill, 12 min., color, 1971.

This is an animated story about a little boy's attempts to make friends with two other children. It shows his lack of success in using methods such as showing off and acting tough. Concludes with friendly relationship beginning to develop when he starts to "act natural."

"HYPOTHESE BETA"—Contemporary Films, McGraw-Hill, 7 min., color, 1969.

An abstract cartoon with a sharp commentary on contemporary society; the lone perforation creates havoc on the computer card when he is rejected by other well-organized perforations.

"JAZOO"—ACI Productions, 18 min., color, 1968.

Early morning atmosphere of the St. Louis Zoo captured in beautiful photography with natural sound effects and notable jazz score.

"NEIGHBORS"—International Film Bureau, 9 min., color, 1957.

Two friends, owning adjoining property, come to blows over a flower which springs up on the boundary line. Unique animation by Norman McLaren.

"PAS DE DEUX"—National Film Board of Canada, 14 min., b/w, 1965.

An unforgettable ballet using superimposition, stroboscopic effects and the ingenuity of Norman McLaren to reach a high plateau of film as art. An Academy Award nominee.

"REFINER'S FIRE"—Doubleday, 7 min., color, 1969.

A stunning film created by three high school students. A beautifully conceived and executed ballet of colored circles and squares. Depicts a situation with social and religious implications. A dramatic score by Moussorgsky, Strauss, and Grieg.

"A ROCK IN THE ROAD"—Bailey Film Associates, 6 min., color, 1968.

A man trips over a rock in the road and falls into a hole. Instead of removing the cause of his accident he gleefully sets it up to catch the next man. Three men react in the same way. The fourth man removes the rock and fills up the hole. An amusing story with a moral.

"RUN!"—Brandon, 9 min., b/w, nd.

Reveals man's apparent tendency toward self-destruction. Panicked and unthinking a man runs blindly through life, pausing only for food, drink and tranquilizers, until he falls into a grave he has dug and buries himself.

"SIRENE"—International Film Bureau, 10 min., color, nd.

The story of a mermaid in the harbor of a modern city. This creature from another era is charmed by a young man playing a flute, and she attempts to flee with him. But the machines that surround the harbor destroy her. The investigation of the mermaid's death provides a swift, satirical look at the bureaucratic institutions of modern society. When the body is claimed by both the hospital and the zoo, it is divided between them, and the innocent bystander who reported the death is judged guilty. When the chaos has ended and all have left, the young man appears and finds the mermaid's spirit has survived. Both whimsical and deadly serious, this visually exciting film is a thought-provoking comment on modern life.

"THE SHOOTING GALLERY"—Sim Productions Inc., 6 min., color, 1970.

Mechanical targets in a shooting gallery are the protagonists in an allegory of freedom repressed and love violently destroyed.

"THE SWORD"—Crowell, Collier, and McMillan, 6 min., color, 1969.

Concerns responsibility in today's world; explores "apathy", discusses war, oppression, and the tendency of man to tolerate whatever does not personally affect him.

"TIME PIECE"—McGraw-Hill, 8 min., color, 1966.

"Theater of the absurd" techniques depict the rush, noise, and confusion of modern society. Open to many interpretations, not the least possible being that it is sheer farce.

"THE TOP"—McGraw-Hill, 8 min., color, 1966.

Animated comic parable about the attainment of material success. Antics of differing social types who try to climb to the top by fair means and foul.

"TOYS"—National Film Board of Canada, 7 min., color, 1967.

Children are pressed against a store window looking at toys. Suddenly a revolving platform of soldiers, rifles, tanks, planes, etc., come alive and full-scale battle takes place. The children become robot-like during the battle. Shows the inhumanity of war and its desensitizing effect.

"URBANISSIMO"—McGraw-Hill, 6 min., color, 1967.

Dramatizes the blight perpetuated by chaotic urban development. This sparkling animated film is the story of an unassuming farmer who becomes so intrigued with the urban monster that he leaves the country to follow it. Produced by Faith and John Hubley.

"THE WORLD OF 68"—Pyramid, 4 min., 1968.

Film maker Charles Braverman has condensed the year 1968 into four minutes by edited stills and motion pictures which reflect the events and major concerns of the year.

We are fortunate in St. Louis to have two excellent public libraries with film collections, the St. Louis Public Library and the St. Louis County Library, as well as the St. Louis University Instructional Media Center, which has its own film collection. Another excellent source of free films is the *Educator's Guide to Free Films*, which can be found in most libraries.

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Testing Reading Comprehension in ESL: Background and Current State of the Art

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Most of our standardized ESL proficiency tests which include a reading comprehension component were developed during the twenty-plus years from the early forties to the mid sixties.[1] What is particularly noteworthy about all these reading measures is that they owed almost nothing to the linguistic theories which so permeated the ESL teaching methods and classroom materials of the day, and which influenced the design and content of the other types of ESL tests produced in that period. Rather, they were in most regards very faithful copies of the comprehension tests long-used with native speakers of the language. The reason for this may be simply stated: the audio-lingual principals which for a time held such a grip on our ESL theory and practice gave little attention to the so-called high-level skills of reading and writing, which were regarded as but secondary manifestations of language. And therefore, the writers of such advanced-level test as needed a reading component followed the best course open to them and borrowed from the reading specialists, with their extensive background of psychological theorizing and experimental research. Clearly, then, a brief consideration of these is necessary at the outset of any historical summary of the testing of reading in ESL.

Probably the first important description of the reading process was that made as long ago as 1917 by the psychologist Edward L. Thorndike, and it is no exaggeration to say that Thorndike's views have colored most subsequent thinking on the subject (see, for example, Simons, 1971:340). In his 1917 article, Thorndike reported his study of the mistakes which children made in answering paragraph comprehension questions. Though Thorndike's experiments and his reporting of findings appear somewhat crude by modern professional standards (Otto, 1971, Stauffer, 1971), his conclusions still make important

[1] The following are particularly to be noted:
(1) the bilingual *Inter-American Tests of Language*, produced in 1943 by the Committee on Modern Languages of the American Council on Education to measure Puerto Rican children's progress in English in relation to achievement in Spanish;
(2) Educational Testing Service's 1947 English Examination for Foreign Students, apparently the first test battery designed to measure the general English proficiency of overseas students applying to U.S. colleges and universities;
(3) the *Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English* (1953-), developed by Robert Lado of the University of Michigan's English Language Institute, at the request of the U.S. Information Agency, as an American response to the Cambridge certificate examinations;
(4) the *Vocabulary and Reading Test* of the American Language Institute of Georgetown University (1960-), used as part of the English proficiency battery prepared by ALIGU for overseas use by U.S. Government agencies;
(5) the *Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency* (1961-), produced by ELI, Michigan, to aid U.S. institutions in screening foreign-student applicants for admission;
(6) the *Test of English as a Foreign Language*—TOEFL (1964-), which, under the direction of Educational Testing Service, has grown during the past decade to be the most widely used of our instruments for measuring the English proficiency of foreign applicants to our institutions of higher learning.

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reading because of their general impact on the reading field (Thorndike, 1917):

> Understanding a paragraph is like solving a problem in mathematics. It consists in selecting the right elements of the situation and putting them together in the right relations, and also with the right amount of weight or influence or force for each. The mind is assailed as it were by every word in the paragraph. It must select, repress, soften, emphasize, correlate, and organize, all under the influence of the right mental state or purpose or demand . . . It thus appears that reading an explanatory or argumentative paragraph . . . involves the same sort of organization and analytic action of ideas as occur in thinking of supposedly higher costs.

As we can see from this quotation, Thorndike reached the conclusion that *reading is reasoning*, a viewpoint which, though never without its critics, came to enjoy widespread acceptance among subsequent researchers, authors of teaching materials, and writers of comprehension tests.

As just one example of the many psychologists following more or less in the Thorndike tradition, we may cite Frederick B. Davis, whose research spanned some 25 years. Davis's (1972) initial experiments led him to conclude that the large numer of operational skills that had been suggested as elements in the comprehension process could be reduced to five that were experimentally distinguishable:

1. Knowledge of word meanings
2. Reasoning in reading
3. Concentration on literal sense meaning
4. Following the structure of a passage
5. Recognizing the mood and literary techniques of a writer

Further experimentation convinced Davis that, of these five skills, by far the most important (accounting for 89% of the variance of the trait) were the first two. Hence his general conclusion that "comprehension among mature readers is not a unitary ability but that it is largely dependent on knowledge of word meanings and on ability to reason in verbal terms."

Alongside the empirical studies of Thorndike, Davis, and many others, there have been, since about 1919, a multitude of what Davis calls "armchair analyses," (p. 631) that is, analyses lacking any association with specific experimental data. Typically, these have consisted of lists or "taxonomies" of skills which it *seemed reasonable* to a particular writer to associate with the comprehension process.

Both early data-based and subjective analyses tended in general to be compatible with the Thorndike view of reading as reasoning, and together they provided the basis for the familiar reading test with its series of short passages, each followed by multiple-choice questions measuring such assumed comprehension skills as ability to select the main thought of a passage, to determine the author's purpose and point of view, to draw inferences from the passage content, and so forth. It was to this test model which ESL test writers naturally turned in the forties, fifties, and sixties. The same underlying assumptions about the nature of reading have long been accepted by the authors of ESL reading exercises as well, though most of them have probably been unaware of the precise sources of the traditions they have followed.[2]

Both the traditions and the tests reflecting them have, however, come under increased criticism in recent years, not only from psychologists, who have attacked them on both theoretical and empirical grounds, but also from linguists, now freed from the behaviorist-structuralist prejudices that for a time prevented them from seeing reading comprehension as a valid object of their concern. The following seem to me the most significant of the objections that have been raised.

First, it is argued that no satisfactory understanding of comprehension will be possible until we have replaced our eclectic lists and taxonomies with a sound *theory of language*.[3] Such a theory, many would insist (see, for example, Farr, 1971), must distinguish between those processes that are specific to reading and those which characterize much more general mental abilities—ability to make inferences," for example.

Second, the traditional view that comprehension is made up of bundles of experimentally distinguishable—and hence separately testable—skills has been periodically challenged on empirical as well as theoretical ground. Research findings such as those of Davis have been disputed by other highly respected psychologists who contend that "comprehension is a unitary ability that, in combination with errors of measurement alone, accounts for all the variance of measurement in reading" (cited—though not with approval—by Davis, 1972). Forms of the global-skill theory

[2] Thus, for example, one finds the following types of comprehension questions in L.G. Alexander's *Fluency in English* (London and Harlow: Longmans, 1967):

Which of these phrases would best serve as a title for the passage? Give reasons for your choice.

Which of these statements do you think the author would agree with? Give reasons for your choice.

Explain in a sentence the purpose of the examples given by the author in lines 11-23.

Quote a sentence from the passage from which you could deduce that a writer must be a lonely person.

I by no means wish to suggest disapproval of these sorts of questions as a teaching device. My point is simply to illustrate the universality of the "reading as reasoning" doctrine.

[3] See Simons (1971) for a critical analysis of seven traditional approaches to the analysis of comprehension. Simons rejects all seven and recommends the application of transformational-grammar theory in the investigation of children's ability to recover the deep structure of sentences—a logical (though admittedly limited) first step, he believes, toward an understanding of the comprehension process.

have also been advanced recently by some linguists, who speculate that the high correlations among various types of foreign language tests may point to some common factor underlying competence in all the language skills—perhaps something like "expectancy" or "redundancy utilization" (e.g., Oller, 1973:113—116).

Third, it is often asserted that the typical technique of measuring comprehension by asking questions about paragraph meaning is too indirect to yield trustworthy results; that is, it allows the test writer to intrude into the decoding process to an extent that may well invalidate the measurement procedure.

And fourth, it is charged that reading research has very often been biased by the use of traditional reading tests as criterion measures, a procedure which necessarily results, in the words of Kenneth Goodman (1973:22), "in a self-justifying cycle which institutionalizes tradition."

Actually, a new approach to the measurement of comprehension was provided in the 1950's when Wilson Taylor developed his now well-known cloze procedure (Taylor, 1953, 1956), but such was the weight of tradition that it was not until well into the sixties that the potentials of cloze began to achieve general recognition. Influenced by the work of psychologist Charles Osgood, whose learning theory of communication included the principles of probability and redundancy in language, Taylor presented his subjects with reading passages from which every *nth* word had been systematically deleted. The subjects were then asked to supply the missing items. Scoring could be done either by accepting only those responses identical to the originally deleted words or by allowing any items with a good grammatical and semantic fit. There did not appear to Taylor to be any strong experimental evidence in favor of one method over the other.

Taylor had originally developed cloze as a measure of readability, but it was soon found to be useful as a "gauge of 'individual differences' in the comprehension of readers" (Taylor, 1956:42). The concurrent validity of cloze as a reading comprehension measure was duly established (for a review of the early literature, see Rankin, 1965), for it was found that the new tests correlated quite highly with the traditional passage-with-questions tests. Some researchers went so far as to draw up comparability tables whereby, it is claimed, one can predict from a given percentage score on a cloze test what the approximate percentage score would be on a multiple-choice comprehension test of the same material (Bromuth, 1968, Rankin and Culhane, 1969).

If we recall the various criticisms that have been made of the traditional reading test, it is easy to see why the cloze precedure was welcomed as an alternative. First, it allows the examinee to respond directly to a text, not indirectly through the mediation of a test writer's questions. This, in turn, greatly simplifies the work of the test writer, who need no longer attempt to tap such murky mental processes as "making inferences from what is given," "evaluating thought content," "drawing conclusions," etc. And finally, the mechanical deletion procedure provides the researcher with a distinctly new approach to the analysis of the comprehension process—one which is more compatible with current theories of communicative competence.

Though the use of cloze as a measure of foreign language acquisition had been suggested as early as 1956 by Taylor himself (1956:99), it was not until the mid and late sixties that researchers began reporting significant results from the cloze-testing of students of English as a second language. Probably the most important of these studies was that conducted by Donald Darnell(1970), who correlated cloze-test scores with scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Two very interesting results were reported.

First, Darnell developed a scoring procedure called *clozentropy*, whereby foreign students' responses on cloze passages are allotted values on the basis of the frequency with which the same responses are given by a sample of native speakers of English. In other words, the foreign student is scored on the degree to which his cloze performance matches that of typical native speakers.

Second, Darnell found that his clozentropy test correlated .83 with *total scores* on TOEFL, showing that a single test of the cloze variety tended to rank students very much the same as a five-part, multiple-choice battery which included separate measures of listening, structure, vocabulary, reading, and writing. This finding naturally aroused considerable interest among those linguists who had been questioning the soundness of the "discrete-point" approach to foreign language teaching and testing, whereby language is viewed as the sum of a number of distinct, though partly overlapping, skills to be taught and tested more or less separately on a point-by-point basis. *Integrative* teaching and testing for "general communicative competence" was gaining considerable ground in the late sixties, and the results of the cloze experiments seemed to provide evidence in support of this approach. The continuing investigation of cloze as a "global" test of foreign language competence obviously has both theoretical and practical implications of the greatest importance. Inasmuch as our present topic is the measurement of reading comprehension, however, I shall confine further remarks about cloze to its use for that specific purpose.

A rather recent comparision between cloze and the passage-with-questions type of reading test for foreign students has been reported (Pike, 1973) by Educational Testing Service as part of an extensive evaluation of TOEFL. Correlations (corrected for attenuation) ranged between .88 and .97, confirming that the cloze technique merits serious consideration as an alternative to the conventional reading test for non-native speakers of English. This is not to say, however, that there are not both theoretical and practical problems with cloze, as with other kinds of reading measures.

First, there is still uncertainty about just what it is that a cloze test measures. To John Carroll (1972:19), for example,

> it would seem that cloze scores are dependent chiefly on what may be called the 'local redundancy' of a passage . . . There is no clear evidence that cloze scores can measure the ability to comprehend or learn the major ideas or concepts that run through a discourse.

Since these words were written, some experimental evidence has been offered both supporting and refuting Carroll's suspicions; the issue cannot yet be considered settled.

Second, it has been argued that the cloze procedure "lacks construct validity for the same reason that all tests of (the) reading comprehension process do, that is, the absence of a theory of the process" (Simons, 1971:348). Certainly it can be said that no such theory has yet won general acceptance, and thus it is probably not an exaggeration to say that not only are we unsure what a cloze text is measuring, but we cannot be entirely certain what it *should* be measuring.

Third, it has been repeatedly observed that "the mechanical selection of words for deletion in the cloze procedure tends to produce a sizable number of non-discriminating items which lower reliability" (Rankin, 1965). Some researchers, it is true, have reported pleasingly high reliability coefficients for their cloze tests, but the generalization still holds: the reliability of even 50 deletion cloze tests, though high enough for group comparisons, will quite often be too low to allow one to make confident decisions about individuals.[4]

And finally, there is the very practical problem in large-scale testing of the considerable time and effort required to score students' individual responses to cloze tests, especially when the "acceptable substitute" scoring method is employed.

As we continue our experimentation with cloze,[5] therefore, it would seem imperative to keep our minds open to other potentially useful techniques for measuring comprehension. I should like to conclude by mentioning some of the alternative methods which appear worthy of further investigation.

First among these are the so-called "modified cloze" procedures. In the "standard" cloze which we have been considering, words are deleted mechanically regardless of their grammatical or semantic function. But there has also been considerable experimentation with "rational deletion" cloze tests in which the test writer makes judgmental deletions on the basis of some criteria of his own (see, for example, Greene, 1965 and Oller and Inal, 1971). Thus for purposes of measuring mastery of the grammatical system, he might delete only certain form classes such as prepositions or verbs. Or in a test of reading comprehension he might restrict deletions to context words whose accurate replacement seems to depend upon thorough contextual understanding.

Such a rational deletion cloze test, further modified by being cast in the multiple-choice format, was one of several experimental measures included in the recent ETS study of TOEFL, and it was found to correlate extremely well with both the TOEFL reading subtest (.94–.99, with correction for attenuation) and with standard cloze tests (.86–.99). I, too, have been experimenting for some time with cloze-related tests, though on the one-and two-sentence level, in which a word deleted at or near the end of each written segment is to be replaced by one of four high-frequency lexical items:

> I have longed hoped to see a really outstanding film of Dostoievsky's novels, but so far I have been ——.
>
> A. fortunate B. unwilling C. surprised
> D. disappointed

Preliminary evidence suggests that such tests correlate quite highly both with conventional reading tests[6] and with teacher evaluations of their students' reading ability.

To be sure, purists object to all varieties of modified cloze because they violate the basic rationale of cloze by allowing the test writer to make subjective judgments about items to be deleted. But if further experiments verify the ETS findings that such tests have high correlations with both conventional read-

[4] For example, the reliability indices which Pike (1973) reported for cloze tests administered to foreign students of English ranged from .78 to .91, four out of six being under .88.

[5] The reader who wishes to review past studies of cloze relating to ESL testing should consult the recent bibliography compiled and annotated by Oller (1975).

[6] The correlation between my experimental 40-item test and the TOEFL reading subtest (N=69) is .75, which is sufficiently high to indicate a strong positive relationship between the two measures, yet not so high that we need conclude they are performing identical functions.

ing tests and a standard cloze, the technique would seem justified on pragmatic grounds.

Two other item types were found in the ETS study to have similarly high correlations with TOEFL reading and with standard cloze tests. The first consisted of the familiar vocabulary-in-context items in which an underlined word or phrase in a sentence is followed by four synonym choices:

> As a result of the meeting, the general strike was *averted*.
>
> A. continued
> B. announced
> C. avoided
> D. begun

A strong positive correlation between vocabulary and reading is, of course, expected—the *Manual for TOEFL Score Recipients* (1973) reports a typical correlation of .69. No doubt the reason for the unusually high correlation between this particular kind of vocabulary test and measures of reading comprehension is the contextual factor that is lacking when, for example, the task is simply to match an isolated test word with a synonym.

The other item type from the ETS study was of the sentence-combining variety: four short sentences are followed by four possible ways of combining them into one, the examinee being asked to select the best one-sentence version:

> Mrs. Brown went to the store. It was a department store. She took back the coat. She had bought it the previous day.
>
> A. Mrs. Brown went to the department store to take back the coat she had bought the previous day. (etc.)

Further research is needed to establish precisely why this item type, presumably a measure of writing ability, correlates so well with reading tests. One's off-the-cuff hypothesis is that both writing and reading demand a high degree of sensitivity to syntactic relationships.

Here, then, are three types of tests which, though they appear to tap somewhat different abilities (ability to complete sentences, to choose synonyms of "hard" words in context, to combine groups of short sentences), all seem from preliminary studies to order foreign learners of English in about the same way as conventional reading tests. All stand in need of further experimental work—e.g., to determine the effects on test validity of combining two or three such measures in one test.

In summary, we may say that testing of reading in ESL is presently in the same state of flux and uncertainty as the fields of language testing and reading generally. Most standardized ESL reading comprehension tests continue to follow the familiar passage-with-questions pattern of conventional reading tests for native speakers of English—a pattern built on eclectic traditions and supported not by an adequate theory of reading, or of language, but by a considerable body of empirical data. Though perhaps still regarded as face-valid by a high proportion of users, the passage-with-questions tests are being subjected to increasingly sharp criticism from psychologists and linguists, who on the basis of their own theoretical and experimental work challenge the underlying hypotheses about the nature of the comprehension process. Simultaneously, a number of item types have been identified which seem, at the very least, to correlate highly enough with the conventional tests to deserve consideration as replacements. It is still too early, however, to say whether any of these will ultimately pass the theoretical and pragmatic tests that could secure their general acceptance.

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PAPER SIX

Reading English as a Second Language

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Because reading is a process that involves perception, no one is prepared to say exactly how the process operates; therefore, to attempt to discuss reading in a second language without any real understanding of the reading process in the first language may very well be presumptuous. However, enough has been written recently to make us believe that we can identify some of the factors—what might perhaps be called obstacles—in developing efficient skills in reading English as a second language. This paper does not pretend to offer solutions to problems; it simply is a series of "observations" on reading English as a second language formulated after having surveyed recent literature in the field.

As a basis for discussion, I would like to use Ronald Wardhaugh's description of reading, which is an expansion of the usual dichotomized definition of reading as the visual recognition of graphic symbols and an understanding of their meaning. Wardhaugh describes reading this way:

> When a person reads a text, he is attempting to discover the meaning of what he is reading by using the visual clues of spelling, his knowledge of probabilities of occurrence, his contextual-pragmatic knowledge, and his syntactic and semantic competence to give a meaningful interpretation to the text. Reading is not a passive process, in which a reader takes something out of the text without any effort or merely recognizes what is on the page and then interprets it, a process in which a stage of decoding precedes a stage of involvement with meaning. There is little reason to suppose that there are two such discrete, non-overlapping stages. Reading is instead an active process, in which the reader must make an active contribution by drawing upon and using concurrently various abilities that he has acquired. (Wardhaugh, 1969)

The following key words or phrases from Wardhaugh's definition will be discussed in some detail: *meaning, visual clues to spelling, probabilities of occurrence, contextual-pragmatic knowledge,* and *syntactic and semantic competence.* If we accept this definition, which echoes others but is more explicit, it follows that readers must attain some level of competence in these various areas. A lack of competence in any area could reasonably be expected to present an obstacle to effective reading.

The difference between reading in a first and in a second language depends upon, among other things, at what point in a person's life a second language reading experience is introduced. If a child is taught to read first in his native language, he has the advantage of knowing the oral signals of that language. For the most part he can attribute to the visual symbols the meanings of what he already reacts to as language. If, however, a child is taught to read a second language *before* he has learned to read his first language, he must learn not only a different medium of communication (the relationship between a visual and an oral signal), but he has to do this within an unfamiliar linguistic framework. He will not be able to rely upon his native language competence to help in the decoding process.

In this paper we will concern ourselves primarily

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with reading a second language after having learned to read in the first language.

Let us now consider, within the framework offered by Wardhaugh, what some of these second language reading problems may be.

Meaning

The question of how we extract meaning from writing is complex. There is some evidence to show that the more rapidly a person reads, the better his comprehension (McNamara, 1970 and Smith, 1971). Short-term memory is a factor in reading, and the more slowly a person reads, the greater may be the strain on his memory.

Eye movements in the physical act of reading have been thought to play a part in extracting meaning from the printed page. Research done by Oller (1972) and Oller and Tullius (1972) using Eye Movement Photography shows that it is neither regressions nor fixations that slow the reading rate of foreign students but the *length of fixation*. This suggests that the longer fixation is needed to process the semantic and syntactic information with which the reader is being bombarded. These findings tend to dispell the oft-held belief that foreign students need practice in developing the habit of making fewer fixations per line of writing. Oller and Tullius summarize their research thus:

> Results of EMP indicate that reading difficulties of non-native speakers are substantially different in type (as well as in number) from the reading problems of natives. The implications of this finding for ESL teaching can only be fully determined by further research; however, it appears that the core of the problem for the non-native reader is essentially one of central processing rather than peripheral skill. (Oller and Tullius, 1973)

Visual clues for spelling

One of the most obvious difficulties in using spelling clues for reading appears when the student's native language is not alphabetically represented. Cowan (personal communication) tends to feel that Persian students may have more than the usual difficulty in reading English efficiently because of conditioning by their own orthography, and he is presently involved in a perceptual experiment to test this hypothesis.

Although English is alphabetically symbolized, there is relatively poor "fit" between sound and graphic symbol. While there is sufficient evidence to dispute the statement that "English spelling is chaotic," nonetheless, English spelling patterns do not conform to the one-to-one relationship between symbol and sound which is characteristic of other languages with better "fit," such as Finnish or Spanish. Spelling clues in English are more complex: consider for example, word pairs such as *bit-bite, mad-made,* and *not-note* in which the so-called "silent" *e* signals sound contrasts.

An interesting experiment by Corcoran (as an M.A. thesis at UCLA) dealing with the possible relationship between native and non-native speakers' awareness of the presence of these "silent" *e*'s is reported by Hatch (1973). Corcoran found that when asked to cross out *e*'s on a printed page native English speakers do not do as well as non-native speakers; they tend to skip over these letters when they appear in non-content words and to cross out with more accuracy those in stressed syllables. The relationship here between the acoustic signal and the written symbol is undeniable. The fact that a native speaker can slur over these "silent" *e*'s to the extent that they are not consciously perceived may be part of what lies behind the difference in rate of reading between native and non-native students. We need to know more about the significance of this relationship between the sound system and the orthographic system and the part it may play in the reading process. The work of Bever and Bower (1970) on "auditory perceptual strategies" relating the visual clues to grammar rather than just to phonological data poses some interesting areas of research.

Klima (1972) discusses the levels of linguistic structure signalled by English orthography. He uses the word *rediscover* as an illustration of an aggregate of the following levels: (1) a complex phonetic combination of a string of distinct sound segments; (2) a composite of morphological units (*re-dis-cover*) which can also be viewed as a prefix (*re-*) and a verbal stem (*discover*); and (3) a verb meaning "to obtain knowledge of, once again." In search of an optimal orthography he stresses the fact that what may be easiest for reading may not always be the most useful for retaining linguistic information. This is reminiscent, in part, of Chomsky and Halle's (1968) contention that English spelling reflects the linguistic deep structure of words. Klima is quick to point out that the optimality he is suggesting is useful only for the first language speaker and reader. However, the fact that these levels of linguistic structure exist in words and are revealed in spelling should perhaps be pursued with more vigor and greater depth than through the usual lists of prefixes and word formation exercises as found in present-day reading texts. Perception of these levels of structure may be part of the "central processing" that Oller and Tullius refer to.

Probabilities of occurrence

The importance of vocabulary has always been emphasized in teaching reading to ESOL students. The selection of vocabulary through the use of word frequency lists such as those of Thorndike and Lorge (1944) and Michael West (1953) or the insertion of word glosses or vocabulary lists is common practice in the preparation of reading materials. In addition to mere frequency of occurrence, however, Wardhaugh's reference to "probabilities of occurrence" includes the concept of semantic collocations, that is, "word sets with internal semantic relationships." The term *collocation* as used by British linguists implies that certain words have the mutual expectancy of other words. Part of the meaning of *dark*, for example, is its collocation with *night*. The British use of the term is generally limited to the so-called content words, but in a larger sense the "probabilities of occurrence" which Wardhaugh speaks of may include syntactic signals of subject-verb word order, nouns following prepositions, nouns following determiners, and the like.

This feature of the reading process is akin to the idea of "expectancy," described by Allen (1973) as the student's ability to guess what should come next in connected discourse. Syntactic items such as sequence signals (conjunctive adverbs, pronouns, etc.) play an important part in providing such "expectancy" clues.

The effective use of cloze procedure is certainly dependent upon the concept of "probabilities of occurrence" or "expectancy." Although this procedure has most often been associated with testing, it is equally effective as a teaching device. (See, for example, the text by Newmark, Mintz, and Hinsley, 1964.) It seems to be one of the most active kinds of exercises for teaching reading because it forces the student to utilize his total linguistic competence. Here again we may be witnessing a means of developing or helping to develop the "central processing" which was mentioned above.

Frank Smith (1971) proposes what he refers to as an unconventional reading model which describes readers as "'predicting' their way through a passage of text, eliminating some alternatives in advance on the basis of their knowledge of the redundancy of language, and acquiring just enough visual information to eliminate the alternatives remaining." Evidence seems to be mounting in recent research to show that his model is not really so unconventional after all.

Pierce (1973) describes syntactic "expectancy" in this way:

> A major need of students in advanced reading is recognition of the unchanging *relationships* among sentence parts, regardless of their form or their relative positioning . . . Awareness of these relationships is the prime concern of expectancy study.

And the title alone of one of Kenneth Goodman's articles (1971), "Reading: A Psycholinguistic Guessing Game," is certainly suggestive of "expectancy" or "probabilities of occurrence."

"Contextual-pragmatic knowledge"

The fact that a student can read something orally does not mean that he understands what he has read. To make sense of it he must have some practical knowledge of the context of what he is reading.

A lack of contextual-pragmatic knowledge bedevils us all. A page of quantum mechanics or algebraic topology is as frustrating to me as a page of Chinese; the only difference is that I can "read" the quantum mechanics and algebraic topology (that is, I can mouth the words, at least until I get to the very involved symbolic logic; then I can't even "read" that); while in Chinese I haven't even reached the first level of reading, the ability to translate the characters into their spoken form. With Chinese I lack the ability to react to the visual clues. With quantum mechanics and algebraic topology I lack contextual-pragmatic knowledge.

Morris (1968) says that we often stop short of providing the student with this contextual-pragmatic knowledge.

> The major weakness in the reading of ESL students at the secondary level is the fact that, in all too many instances, the initial reading step is performed: the child decodes the symbols and produces the word—and stops. The word fails to trigger *anything* because the concepts it represents to us and to the author do not exist for the child, or they exist in a limited, vague form.

Students must be made ready for what they are asked to read. This means explaining cultural concepts which are different from those with which they are familiar—a kind of cultural reading readiness, so to speak.

The hypothesis that presenting cultural information beforehand would improve reading comprehension was tested by Gatbonton and Tucker (1971). They found that providing the students with cultural concepts, which were implicit in the reading but which Filipino students did not possess, significantly altered their performance on tests of reading comprehension.

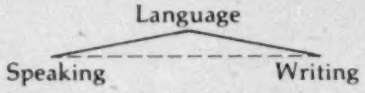
It has sometimes been thought useful to present cultural information through reading, but this can be done most effectively when students have reached a point in their reading where this is *all* that is being asked of them, that is, they are being asked only to

absorb new information, not to puzzle out structures and meanings (Fries and Fries, 1961).

"Syntactic and semantic competence"

If a reader is familiar with the major syntactic and semantic components of the spoken language, and he has "cracked the code" of the writing system, why should he still have trouble reading? Yet this is exactly what happens to countless non-native speakers (to say nothing of native speakers). This is especially true at the advanced level where students have gone beyond reading only what they can produce orally. A major source of difficulty here seems to stem from differences between the spoken and written form of the language.

It is clear that writing and speech are different. The illusion of writing as "speech written down" has long since been dispelled. The following diagram illustrates the relationship between the spoken and written forms of a given language.



The broken line points to a relationship between the spoken and written forms of the language but also serves to illustrate that this relationship is tenuous. Speech and writing are two different but related performance models of a given language; and there are, as a matter of fact, people who may learn one and not the other.

Norris (1970) lists the differences in structure and style between the two performance models in two ways: features of difficulty in reading compared to speech, and features of ease.

Both Gleason (1965) and Twaddell (1973b) refer to the written form of language as an "autonomous" medium of communication, accounting for this autonomy partially by the fact that there is much less redundancy in writing than in speech.

In addition to obvious differences caused by the absence in writing of phonological clues (stress, intonation, and juncture phenomena), there are distinct syntactic structures which appear much more frequently, sometimes even exclusively, in writing. Most often cited as an example of this type of structure is the non-restrictive relative clause. (One of my favorite examples comes from Roberts [1961]: *He is entirely dependent upon his widowed mother, who is a faro dealer in Las Vegas.*)

Commenting on the difference between speech and writing, Allen (1973) mentions transposed elements, prepositional phrases in initial position (often with inverted subject and verb), participial constructions, and passives (whether "true" or "stative"). She provides as examples the following sentences:

> Although most people deplore it, graffiti is widespread.
>
> Of special interest to teachers is the Language Methodology Center.
>
> Funded by the Office of Education, the project will begin on March 1.
>
> The wells are located near the perimeter.
>
> The heat is recirculated in the fuel-vapor zone.

Allen stresses the need for specific teaching of such structures which do not appear frequently in the spoken language. She, like Wilson (1973) and Saville-Troike (1973), comments on the fact that most of the efforts in ESOL teaching have, until recently, been expended on teaching oral English. Now that there appears to be a more balanced approach to teaching ESL skills, including more emphasis upon reading, there is a great need for discovering exactly what differences do exist both syntactically and semantically in spoken and written English.

As an aid to attaining a grasp of structural units in reading Plaister (1968) describes a technique used at the University of Hawaii. A reading selection is presented to the students in a two-column format, each column containing a grammatical construction of three or four words. This technique was conceived partly as an eye span exercise, an exercise to increase the number of letters or words a person can comprehend at one fixation of the eye. Even though there is now reason to believe that eye span is not one of the crucial factors in the slower reading rate of non-native speakers, Plaister's work is still useful for the purpose of drawing attention to syntactic structures. Non-native readers (and some native readers) have difficulty in drawing together these structural units, and activities such as Plaister describes can provide practice in doing just that.

Research by Goodman of oral reading "miscues" seems to lead to the conclusion that first-language readers probably lean more heavily on semantic rather than syntactic clues to gain meaning from their reading. He has also learned from miscues (Burke and Goodman, 1970) that a carry-over of phonological patterns from a first language does not seem to interfere with comprehension in a second language (French-Canadian-English bilingual substitution of *harms* for *arms*, for example).

Twaddell (1973a) calls attention to an important distinction to be made in kinds of reading comprehension: one where understanding must be absolute (laboratory instructions, Internal Revenue Service Instructions), and the other where educated guesses will suffice. The latter type of reading comprehension seems to be difficult to teach, but the ability to accept vagueness in meaning or of being satisfied

with "getting the general effect" is necessary for rapid reading.

Povey (1967) provides a humorous illustration of this vague kind of comprehension in an anecdote about an ESL student reading the story of Rip Van Winkle. The student was disturbed because he didn't know what a sycamore tree was (under which Rip slept for twenty years). Povey suddenly realized that *he* didn't either, but he also realized that it didn't matter. The general concept "tree" was all that was needed to understand the story.

It might be interesting to speculate as to the possibility of any so-called "general" or "vague" grasp of syntax to parallel this vagueness permitted in semantics.

The type of reading ability required for comprehending technical writing has received considerable attention recently. (See Cowan, 1973; Ewer, 1971; Lackstrom, Selinker, and Trimble, 1970; and Widdowson, 1972.) This kind of research in the occurrence and frequency of occurrence of specialized syntax and lexicon in technical and scientific writing will surely provide insights for the teaching of reading in specialized areas. Cowan's work (1974) reveals some interesting data:

> From our very limited analysis of medical texts we already have indications that certain structures, embedded questions for example, occur with such low frequency that it would be pointless to emphasize them or even teach them at all.[1]

In discussing the lexical component in technical English, Cowan makes a distinction between technical and sub-technical items. Technical vocabulary is that which is essential to a given discipline and necessarily learned as a by-product of study within that discipline: e.g. *cellulose, molecule, carbohydrate, photosynthesis.* Sub-technical vocabulary, on the other hand, is not discipline-specific but appears in much scientific or technical reading. These items are, according to Cowan, "context independent words which occur with high frequency across disciplines": e.g. *function, inference, isolate, basis, presuppose, simulate.*

Although an extensive vocabulary is necessary for facility in reading, a word of warning is in order, and Twaddell (1973a) wisely cautions against asking students to memorize the meanings of isolated words. As an example of this poor pedagogical procedure he recounts "the familiar story of the teacher who urged his class: 'Be sure to memorize this word very carefully, because it is so rare that you'll probably never see it again.' "

[1]Cowan (personal communication) believes in the necessity of defining approaches to teaching reading in terms of the educational setting in which it is taught. He designates at least three such approaches: (1) reading taught as part of a program emphasizing total communicative competence; (2) reading taught as a single skill with little or no emphasis upon speaking and listening comprehension; and (3) reading taught in a bilingual situation. In the above quotation he is referring to his second approach when he says "even teach them at all."

Techniques for teaching reading

Having now looked at Wardhaugh's description of the reading process, we come to the question of what techniques to use in teaching reading in ESL. Many of the sources mentioned above contain information useful to teachers, but some are more directly concerned with classroom activities. Let me just mention a few items. Norris (1970) provides what many think is the "classic" article on techniques for teaching reading to advanced foreign students. Both Allen (1966) and Eskey (1970) have excellent suggestions for reading activities. Bumpass (1965) and Finocchiaro (1969) are particularly good resources for teaching young children to read English as a second language. However, any one best way to teach reading continues to elude us, perhaps because the conclusion forced upon us by recent research is that the reading process involves some kind of global attack by the reader on the printed page. Oller and Tullius refer to "central processing"; Eskey (1973) talks of "creative synthesis." Clearly, the reader draws simultaneously upon all the skills delineated in Wardhaugh's definition, but the way in which he does this is unclear. Eskey believes in the innateness of whatever this skill is:

> It seems clear that for reading as for all of the higher-level language functions, the human mind must be innately programmed, and that the job of the teacher is to activate, not to create, the program. Teaching a skill as complex as reading is mainly a matter of getting the student moving in the right direction and providing him with feedback as he develops that skill to the best of his largely innate ability.

Reading is truly a psycholinguistic process, a combination of the use of reasoning and language cues. One piece of research in first language reading which may provide insights into the reasoning portion of the reading process is that of Jacobson (University of Minnesota, 1973). She attempted to discover introspective ("think out loud") procedures in how pupils got meaning from the printed page. Pupils were asked to verbalize their answering of reading comprehension questions. She found that certain reasoning strategies were correlated with specific kinds of reading tasks: finding a key lexical item was the most frequently used strategy in answering questions where inference was required or where the main idea was to be extracted. Generalization (e.g. comparison, definition, expansion) was the second most frequently used strategy, and the third was the use of non-textual personal information.

The results of this study should be encouraging to ESL teachers because they lend credence to the kinds of activities that have been used heretofore in teaching reading: finding key lexical items, eliciting generalizations by the use of oral and written exercises to accompany reading selections, and using the personal experience repertoire of the student in approaching the reading (or, if he does not have any pertinent personal experience, by supplying it before assigning the reading).

Another study of reading strategies is that of Phillips (1975) which describes "think about" procedures used by fourth semester college students studying French. Her conclusion is that "reading is a problem solving behavior," and she suggests that these "think about" procedures may help us identify the characteristics of the reading process.

In summary, we have found no magic formulas, no short cuts to the goal of efficient reading; we find only that we must continue looking for solutions to the problems of teaching reading by inquiring more deeply into the processes involved, but in all probability accepting the statement made by Jarvis (1973) that "Reading may well be the most complex of all human skills which are learned in institutionalized education."

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PAPER SEVEN

Productivity in Intermediate and Advanced Levels of ESL

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If we were to divide college ESL teachers into elementary, intermediate, and advanced level teachers, and then to compare them in terms of their preparedness to teach the classes they are faced with, I am sure that we would find the advanced level teachers to be the least well-prepared, with the intermediate level teachers running a close second. Their lack of preparedness does not stem, I would argue, from either the lack of training in structure and methodology or the lack of ability.

Since I am a staff member of the American Language Institute at the University of Southern California, I take the liberty of describing the situation as I find it there, on the assumption that ALI is representative of many university and college ESL programs throughout the country. At ALI, there are three levels of ESL—elementary (intensive), intermediate (semi-intensive), and advanced.[1] However, our teachers fall for the most part into *two* preference groups: those who prefer teaching elementary classes, and those who prefer teaching the advanced classes.

The generally stated reason for preferring the elementary classes is that the students make a great deal of progress during the semester. I observe also that those who prefer the advanced groups have a strong tendency to emphasize in the teaching what would normally be considered college writing techniques, such as note-taking, term paper and thesis writing, study techniques, etc., and to avoid the ESL methodologies found in the elementary and intermediate classes. The intermediate level is not the preference of many teachers. According to those who have taught it (including myself), although it is clear that the students need a great deal of ESL exposure and training, it seems that student progress at this level is extremely slow.

Teachers like to teach classes in which they can detect student progress. The elementary level teachers observe a considerable amount of development in English, and the advanced level teachers observe development in college writing skills. The intermediate level teachers do not observe much development at all. Why should this be? I think that one very important reason is that the intermediate and advanced level teachers, when they enter the classroom at the beginning of the semester, do not know what the students' abilities in English are, and therefore do not know what, specifically, the students need. The advanced level teachers can avoid the problem, to some extent, by focussing on college writing techniques.[2] The intermediate level teachers

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[1]The elementary (intensive) level course requires full time English study, 30 hours of class time each week. Since ALI does not accept zero English proficiency students, the elementary level corresponds roughly to the intermediate and advanced intensive courses at other schools. Students who place in the ALI intermediate level course are allowed to take concurrently one or two academic courses. Those who place in the ALI advanced level course may take 3 academic courses in addition to English.

[2]Of course these advanced students need to be taught such college writing techniques. Their command of English, however, is such that they still need to focus on the structure of the language, since their control of the structure is not comparable to that of a native speaker, not even a freshman.

cannot. What both groups of teachers need is specific information on the structures of English that their students both produce and fail to produce on entering these classes.

How do these students reach our classrooms? Normally, on the basis of some standard proficiency exam, such as TOEFL, CELT, the Michigan test, or some similar exam developed by individual colleges. These exams are designed to cover a wide range of structures, and it is the total score (or total part score) which determines the level of the English course the student is required to take. From the teachers' point of view these exams are inadequate. The results of the exams indicate only that the student has reached a certain overall proficiency level, not how the student has performed in order to reach that level. As many have pointed out, knowing how a student performs on a particular test may be useful for admission and placement, but what the teacher needs to know is what particular constructions the student actually uses and how he uses them.[3]

In general, teachers and textbook writers present the structures of English to the learner on the basis of their presumed frequency and complexity in native English. For example, we teach SVO word order (John hit Mary) long before we present OVS word order (It was Mary whom John hit.). We present the more frequent plural formation before we present the formation of possessives, even though the two constructions undergo identical phonological rules. At the elementary level this seems an appropriate strategem. Since the learner does not know anything about English, we cannot use learner knowledge of English as a basis for deciding what to teach. We therefore rely solely upon the criteria of frequency and complexity. However, at the intermediate and advanced levels, it would obviously be more fruitful to make decisions with regard to what structures to teach them and how to teach them, not solely on the basis of their frequency and complexity in native English, but in addition, on the basis of what we know about learner production of these structures at that point in time when they enter these classes. We could then focus our teaching on the differences between what we know them to produce when they enter the classroom, and what we want them to be able to produce when they leave the classroom at the end of the term.

Given that one wants to study the productive ability of intermediate and advanced learners, one must make some assumptions about what they can already produce at the point in time when they enter more advanced classes. It seems reasonable to assume that they can for the most part form simple sentences correctly, that they can in general manipulate plurals and pronouns and tenses and word order, etc. For more advanced classes it would be appropriate to focus on their production of more complex structures—of the types that are normally taught in these classes. If studies of this kind can provide teachers with an indication of what productive capabilities the learners have with regard to these constructions, then the teachers will have a basis for making principled decisions on how to deal with them in the classroom.

What are the kinds of things the teacher would want to know about these complex structures they plan to teach? For any particular construction, the teacher would want to know the following:

1. Do the students already use the construction in question?
2. If so, do they use it appropriately (where "appropriately" includes acceptable distribution and correct formation)?
3. Are there generalizable (or only idiosyncratic) differences among students with regard to the above questions?

It might be the case, for example, that the students are productive in one construction, and non-productive in another. It might also be that the students are productive in a particular construction, but make errors in their use of it. As for the third question, it is a well-known fact that there are non-idiosyncratic differences among students and these differences reflect the students' language backgrounds. Consider, for example, the differences between Japanese and Spanish students in their use of English determiners. These kinds of differences may be exhibited in the students' production of complex syntactic structures as well. One study which indicates that this is the case (Schachter, 1975) shows, for example, that the Persian and Arabic intermediate and advanced learners produce English relative clauses freely (i.e., they are "productive" in relative clauses) whereas Japanese learners at the same levels produce them rarely (i.e., they are "non-productive").

The notions of productivity and non-productivity must be defined precisely, of course, and I shall attempt to do so in a subsequent section. However, the reader should not infer that the notion of productivity in a construction is to be equated with the notion of having acquired a construction, the latter being a phrase in current use among second language researchers, in connection with the precentage of times the construction is used in *obligatory* contents. For example, Burt and Dulay (1974) point out that in spontaneous speech, the learner will produce obliga-

[3]See Corder (1972) for an illuminating discussion of this problem.

tory contexts for certain functors, as in the following:

1. She's dance _____.

If the learner supplies the obligatory -ING form 90% of the time, he is said to have acquired that functor.

This definition of "having acquired" something is useless, however, for any optional element or construction in the language. With constructions such as relative clauses, noun complements, or adverbial clauses, for example, we can only refer to contexts in which they *may* occur, but not to contexts in which they *must* occur. [There is no noun in English which *requires* that a relative clause or noun complement follow it.] Yet it is often optional complex structures such as the above that the intermediate and advanced level teachers focus on in the classroom; and there is a need to know how students use them.

In an ongoing study at USC,[4] Beverly Hart and I have collected data on student production of expanded noun phrases, of the types that are commonly labeled noun complements (NC).[5] We chose as our corpus the compositions written by 250 entering students who, as a result of the USC placement exam, were placed in our intermediate and advanced level classes.[6] The placement exam compositions were chosen for analysis because we wanted to be able to provide our teachers with information on what the students' production was at the beginning of the semester, as they entered the classroom.

USC Placement Level	TOEFL Score Range	Mean TOEFL Scores*
Elementary	Below-450	435
Intermediate	450-499	465
Advanced	500-549	528

(*of the students who report TOEFL scores to USC)

USC administers its own English placement exam, which includes listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and grammar sections, as well as compositions and oral interviews. The university does not accept as evidence of proficiency scores from the widely known exams such as TOEFL or CELT. However, many students do take the TOEFL exam, and have the results sent to USC. Therefore, we have a fairly good idea of the TOEFL range of the students, who, as a result of the USC placement exam, are required to take our ESL courses.

The 250 compositions analyzed were in five groups of fifty each, from students whose native languages were: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Persian, and Spanish. We recorded every attempt to produce noun complements, correct or incorrect, of the types listed below:

NC-THAT: the feeling *that she is not worthy*
the fact *that the environment has been destroyed*

NC-ING: the possibility *of making an appointment with her*
the plans *for developing the country*

NC-TO: the chance *to study*
the right *to elect the president*

The examples above are, in fact, all drawn from the compositions.

The errors produced by the students were categorized, as far as possible, according to the construction the student used rather than the construction the student should have used. For example, the phrase the *possibility to go* would have been categorized as a NC-TO error rather than a NC-ING error. There were a few instances in which the investigators were unable to decide (such as *the possibility of to go*), and in these rare cases the construction was counted twice: once as a NC-TO error, and once as a NC-ING error.

The totals attempted by each group for each construction are the following:

	NC-THAT	NC-INC	NC-TO
Arabic	6	29	38
Chinese	4	26	51
Japanese	5	34	37
Persian	2	24	26
Spanish	0	10	37
Total	17	123	189

At this point it becomes necessary to more precisely characterize the notions of productivity and non-productivity. In fact, two definitions of each are needed:

Total Group

1. 'Productive in a construction' means that the group as a whole produces a substantial number of instances of the construction (where "substantial" in this case is defined, rather arbitrarily, as an average of one occurrence or more for every two compositions).

[4]This study, funded by the AID/NAFSA Liaison Committee, is concerned with learner production of a number of construction types other than the ones discussed in this paper: gerundive, infinitival and that-clauses as complements of verbs, passives, relative clauses, certain types of nominalizations, etc. The project is scheduled for completion by December, 1975. The results should be available shortly thereafter.

[5]The analysis of English used as a basis for investigation of learner production is that presented in Stockwell, Schacter & Partee, *The Major Syntactic Structures of English*.

[6]The composition topics varied, depending on what day and what semester the students took the exam. The average number of words per composition was 240.

2. 'Non-productive in a construction means that the group as a whole produces on the average fewer than one occurrence for every two compositions.

Individual Language Groups

1. 'Non-productive in a construction' means that some particular language group produces fewer instances of the construction than other groups, and that the difference is statistically significant at the .05 level.
2. 'Productive in a construction' means that a group is not non-productive.

The first thing one notices in the chart is that the total of the attempts at the NC-THAT construction is extremely small; and, according to the above 'total group' definitions, one must conclude that the group as a whole is non-productive in NC-THAT constructions. However, it would be a mistake to conclude that non-productivity with regard to a particular construction necessarily implies that teachers at these levels should emphasize that construction in the classroom. Information on non-productivity in a construction must be combined with considerations of its frequency and usefulness in native English. In this instance, it may be the case that the NC-THAT construction is sufficiently uncommon in native English that the teacher would decide not to focus on it at all.[7]

Returning to the chart, and judging the totals of the other constructions on the basis of the 'total group' definitions, it is clear that the total group is productive in both the NC-ING construction, with an average of one every two compositions, and the NC-TO construction, with an average of one every 1.3 compositions. Given that the learners are productive in two of the three constructions, it is useful to consider whether there are significant differences between language groups with regard to each construction. It is possible that although the total group is productive in a construction, some individual language group is non-productive in that construction. Accordingly, *t*-tests for the difference between means of independent groups were performed, with interesting results.

[7]Bill Rutherford has pointed out to me that given a frequency analysis of this construction in native English (to provide a norm from which to judge learner deviations) it is at least possible that its frequency of occurrence in learner English does not in fact deviate from the norm and that the notion of productivity would have to be redefined. I agree that such a possibility exists, and hope that in the near future such norms for native English will be made available to us. At present, however, such rough definitions as mine must suffice.

Let us consider the NC-ING production first. For the individual language groups, the Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Persian speakers are productive in this construction but the Spanish are not; i.e., there are no statistically significant differences between the Arabic, Chinese, Japanese or Persian groups, but each of them differs significantly from the Spanish group at the .05 level. Intermediate and advanced Spanish speakers, then, are non-productive in the NC-ING construction.

The results of the tests for differences between language groups in NC-TO production are not as clear-cut as in the previous case in that there is only one significant difference: that between the Chinese and Persian groups, at the .05 level. In this situation, it is not clear whether to call the Persian group which produced the fewest instances, non-productive, since there were no significant differences between that group and the Arabic, Japanese, and Spanish groups. However, evidence from the analysis of the errors produced by each of the groups in their production of this construction, described below, leads to the tentative conclusion that the Persian group is in fact non-productive in this construction.

ERROR PRODUCTION, NC-ING (as percentage of total)		ERROR PRODUCTION, NC-TO (as percentage of total)	
Arabic	55%	Japanese	35%
Chinese	54%	Arabic	18%
Japanese	38%	Chinese	14%
Persian	21%	Spanish	11%
Spanish	20%	Persian	11%

The total number of occurrences of a particular construction by each language group provides a rough gauge of whether or not the language group in question can be said to be productive in that construction. However, the teacher needs to know more than this when deciding how to deal with such a structure in the classroom. The teacher needs to know, in addition, if the learner is producing the construction correctly according to native English rules of formation and distribution. Comparing groups in terms of the percentage of errors occurring in the total number of attempts to produce a construction proves informative.

These percentages show that the groups producing the largest numbers of a construction also produce the largest percentage of errors, and the groups producing the smallest numbers also produce the smallest percentage of errors. At first glance, this may seem to be intuitively correct—the more attempts at a construction there are, the more errors there are likely to occur. However, if one considers the possible causes for non-productivity, another explanation suggests itself. If, for example, the

groups which produce the fewest total attempts at a construction do so because it is difficult for them, one might suspect that the percentage of their errors to their total attempts would be high. But this is clearly not the case. A more revealing explanation for this phenomenon is that the strategy of avoidance is operating within the groups that are non-productive in these constructions.[8] It appears that the Spanish learners avoid NC-ING constructions and that the Persian learners avoid NC-TO constructions, only producing them when they are relatively sure they are performing correctly. This accounts for the low percentage of errors among the non-productive groups.

There is an interesting corollary to the division between productive and non-productive groups. If a language group is productive with regard to a particular construction, an analysis of the errors will show quite consistent patterning in error types. If a language group is non-productive, there will be no consistent pattern in the errors. Now it is the case that if one considers the errors produced by *any* language groups, some of these errors appear to be purely accidental—they may be lexical, categorial, or any of a number of other things.

lexical	1. . . . it's certainly the right *spot to pay vacation* (101 C21)
categorial	2. There is no *freedom to speech.* (101 S23)
?	3. The people are the *tools to construct and distruct the tradition.* (101 A14)

But within the productive groups, there is, in addition to the accidental errors, a strong tendency to form the same kind of error over and over again. These are what I call 'systematic' errors, and they are of the two types one would expect:

1. errors in formation—where it is clear that the learner is using the construction in question, but that he does not form it strictly according to native English rules. (e.g., 'they sent me enough *budget for heat classroom*')
2. errors in distribution—where the form of the construction is correct, but the distribution is non-native. (e.g., 'I often find *difficulty to do so*')

Let us consider our groups in terms of systematic errors. In the NC-ING construction, the Spanish, being non-productive, exhibit no systematic errors. Among the productive groups, the situation is as follows. Of the 16 errors produced by the Arabic group, 15 were systematic, examples of which are:

[8]See Schachter (1975) for further evidence of avoidance.

Arabic NC-ING Errors

1. Everything in this seems to me to be in continuous *way of changing.* (102 A1)
2. After 10 *hours of looking* they found the ring. (101 A9)

The Chinese group was somewhat more complex in that there are two error types. But of a total of 14 errors, 13 were systematic. The two types were:

Chinese NC-ING Errors

Formation errors:

1. After having ten *times of fail revolution* . . . (101 C8)
2. . . . short of *food for raise cow.* (101 C24)

Distribution Errors:

1. On the contrary, it has the *tendency of decreasing* . . . (102 C21)
2. . . . the *attempt of making a living.* (102 C19)

The Persian group produced 5 systematic errors, of a total of 5.

Persian NC-ING Errors

1. . . . show the correct *way of working* to the worker. (101 P19)
2. . . .It will take much more *time for finding it.* (102 P7)

The Japanese produced 13 errors, 12 of which were systematic.

Japanese NC-ING Errors

1. If they are living within the *distance of their visiting* . . . (101 J24)
2. Even if they have got high grade points in the *examination of writing sentences* . . . (102 J10)

Systematic error production in the NC-TO construction follows the same general pattern described above. The Persian group, being non-productive, exhibits no systematic errors. The Spanish group, producing a total of four errors, also exhibit no systematicity. The remaining three groups all produce significant groups of systematic errors. For the Chinese total of seven errors, six were systematic.

Chinese NC-TO Errors

1. There are 100,000 *people to come to Sun Moon Lake.* (102 C6)
2. There was . . . as well as beautiful beaches in this *area to be known to people in Taiwan.* (102 C4)

Of the total of seven errors for the Arabic group, five were systematic.

Arabic NC-TO Errors

1. It's really hard . . . to give the *impression to like and help everybody.* (101 A1)
2. The important *thing to choose students for specific programs* . . . (101 A10)

Of a total of 14 Japanese errors, 13 were systematic.

Japanese NC-TO Errors

1. I am not a brave *man to continue this terribly sadly story.* (101 J10)
2. He may show active *attitude to express his opinion in foreign language.* (102 J10)

What has the teacher gained as a result of this investigation? For one related group of constructions, and for five groups of intermediate and advanced learners, the teacher has some idea of what learners already produce when they enter the classroom. If the population studied is representative of college ESL students in general, and there is no reason to think otherwise, one is led to the following conclusions. No intermediate or advanced group is productive in the NC-THAT construction. Spanish learners at this level are non-productive in the NC-ING construction, and Persian learners are non-productive in the NC-TO construction. For the productive groups, the teacher knows that systematic errors are produced by each group. Of course investigations of this kind do not provide the teacher with answers to questions that arise as to how these phenomena are best dealt with in the classroom. But they do provide the teacher with evidence as to what the problems of the learners are.

Many more investigations of this type need to be undertaken. Studies need to be made at other colleges which have substantial foreign student populations other than those represented at USC. And studies need to be made on constructions other than the ones reported on in this paper.[9]

Given this kind of information, the teacher cannot help but be in a better position to deal with the needs of the students at these levels. If these studies are forthcoming, the lack of preparedness that intermediate and advanced teachers currently experience can be, to a large extent, overcome. Perhaps as a result of this, there will develop a growing corps of teachers eager to face the challenge that intermediate and advanced ESL learners present.

[9]See footnote #4.

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PAPER EIGHT

Training Teachers for the Role of Nonverbal Communication in the Classroom

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Every American unconsciously reveals his or her mental and physical state to other Americans by the way he or she stands, sits, and walks, as well as by more obvious facial expressions. Anyone who comes from a similar cultural background also unconsciously reads these and others of our nonverbal signals and adjusts his communication accordingly. We cannot avoid reacting to another American's *body* language any more than we can avoid reacting to that person's spoken language. Good manners and other constraints may require us to mask our reactions, but the reactions occur, nonetheless.

Spoken communication is made up of an exchange of ideas expressed in words; *total* communication includes not only verbal exchange, but also an exchange of body signals. Our *verbal* responses usually arise out of conscious choice of ideas, if not of actual words; our *nonverbal* responses are usually unconscious—often to the extent of embarrassing us by revealing our true feelings in spite of what our words may be trying to convey. Unfortunately, whenever our spoken language says one thing while our body language says another, our listener/observer most likely will hear the mouth but believe the body—not the reverse.

If someone were to tell me, after reading this paper, "I really enjoyed your paper," using normal intonation and emphasis, but with shoulders slumped, a dead-pan face, and with a slightly lowered head accompanied by a slow horizontal shaking of the head, I would not believe him or her. No matter what the words were, I would *know* he or she did not like the paper.

If a second person used the identical intonation and other vocal qualities, but stood erect, head level, with a dead-pan face accompanied by slow vertical head nod, I might think he or she liked at least parts of the paper, but certainly was not enthusiastic about it. If still a third person said the same words to me, in exactly the same verbal and nonverbal ways as the second person, but substituted a smile for the dead-pan face, I would be convinced that I had at last found someone who *did* like the paper!

The first time, all the body language signals were negative (shoulder slump, face down, dead-pan, negative head shake); the second time they were all generally positive, but the smile, which would have been a clear indicator of pleasure, was missing (erect posture, head level, vertical head nod, neutral face); the third time, all of the body language signals were similarly positive but the *smile* was also present. In each case, the body language was crucial for an understanding of the meaning of the spoken language.

"Acting out" an experiment, to show teacher trainees that nonverbal communication is important in communication between Americans, can be well spent. When this paper was first read, I acted out these "I really enjoyed your paper" contrasts, rather than explaining them. During the reading of the introductory portion of the paper (before the acting out

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began), most of the audience was sitting with postures indicating defensiveness, skepticism, or some other lack of receptiveness. I noted their *positions mentally*. As soon as the "acting out" was finished, I pointed out the ways in which many of them had unconsciously shifted their postures. Many had relaxed and moved into an "I'm interested now" posture instead of an "I'm politely waiting to see if I'll get interested" posture. I also pointed out that as I had been speaking, I had been reacting to their body language and had been attempting to shape their attitudes toward me and my topic not only by my use of "spoken American" but also by my use of "body American." And we all do this, at least unconsciously, whether speaking to an individual or to a crowd.

But what about those who were listening to my paper, who though Americans were not from the same specific cultural background as mine? Perhaps some of the things I had unconsciously done had turned them off; although they were agreeing with *what* I had been saying, perhaps something about the way I had been saying it had not seemed appropriate. There are body language differences within our own culture which govern what is considered appropriate for certain situations. Perhaps some of them would have felt more comfortable if I had been standing more erect, taking the more authoritarian stance which, through its implications of formality, would lend greater weight to my presentation. Others of them may have felt that I thought I "knew it all" because I was *too* formal, or talking too loudly or looking at them too directly. If there can be such a variety of reactions to the same American by such a relatively small group of other Americans, what must be the reactions of non-Americans?

Many non-Americans have learned at least one thing very well—how to mask any existing negative feelings when speaking with Americans. They may not know *why* they have such negative feelings toward us, but they *do* know enough about cross-cultural communication to hide those negative feelings, certainly from their teachers. This seems to be one of the basic foreigners' rules of "survival body language"—don't ever appear disagreeable to Americans or they'll ask what's wrong with you.

One important consideration which we will not have time to discuss here is how to teach American body language to non-American ESL students (see Taylor, 1975b). A videotape which will be described later is illustrative of one technique used by a teacher to make some advanced ESL students aware of the existence of body language. However, the video is not being shown here in that context; rather it will be described here primarily because of the way it was unexpectedly instrumental in helping the teacher understand and relate to one of her students. That student had been using his native body language in her American classroom setting, but she had been *unconsciously interpreting it as* American body language. Misunderstandings had resulted from his use of spoken English with his "foreign body-language accent."

I personally do not feel we can with any great profit spend class time teaching American body language to the majority of our foreign students. If their spoken language identifies these speakers as foreigners struggling with our language, their inappropriate body language will be accepted as part of their total "foreign accent" by all but the worst among us. For those relatively few foreign students whose English is proficient enough for an American at times to forget that he is speaking to a non-American—for those few, a general introduction to the existence of American body language and some analysis of their own more noticeable body-language errors can be very beneficial. We do not as yet have a usable, scientific description of "General American Body Language" upon which to base a course in "American Body Language for Foreigners"; and perhaps we never shall. However, in the meantime, of great importance is the training of EFL/ESL teachers to do certain very specific things with body language in their classrooms. That is what the rest of this paper is about.

There are at least three reasons why nonverbal communication is important in the American-teacher-with-non-American-students setting. First, the teacher unconsciously reveals his or her attitudes toward the students, toward the teaching materials, toward the students' responses, and toward ESL teaching in general. Second, the teacher unconsciously reacts to the body language of the students. And, third, the students unconsciously react to the body language of the teacher.

If any one of these reactions is negative—or is even interpreted by the observer as negative—some student-teacher rapport is lost, and damage is done to that all-important language learning variable, student motivation. The teacher, therefore, needs to recognize the ways he or she sends negative nonverbal signals about the students, about the textbook, about student responses, or about ESL teaching. Self-analysis of a videotape or the judicious comments of a skilled classroom observer may also help to point out these negative signals. Only after these have been identified can the teacher's negative signals either be changed or be masked by other appropriate signals.

Teacher trainees can be sensitized to the existence and importance of nonverbal communication if the teacher trainer will do some of the following activities with them—without telling them the purpose of

what they are being asked to do: (1) Trainees should stand, move away from their chairs, and pair off with another trainee. Assign each member of the pair to tell the other person his/her names, where their parents live, and how long they have lived there. When they are nearly finished, stop them and have them "freeze" in the standing positions they are in. Have each then stretch out the right arm toward the partner to see how far apart they have been standing. Then have them determine where they fit into the general "arm's length territoriality space bubble" that Americans seem to have for friendly, non-intimate conversation. (The talk-about-your-parents topic allows them to communicate real information which is only slightly personal.) Then have them step one step closer and look at each other, then another step. As they close the gap, point out that once their space bubble has been invaded, they have all probably begun defensive reactions, such as smiling, giggling, looking away or down, crossing arms in front of the body, turning sideways, breaking eye contact, etc.

(2)Have them sit down. As soon as they are settled, point out how they have arranged their chairs or postures to return to their space bubble security.

(3) If the above activities are not possible, then, while speaking on some general topic, gradually walk over until you are standing directly in front of one of the trainees. When he/she pulls in his/her legs, begins to squirm, drops eye contact, or otherwise shows discomfort, point these out to the class.

(4)Move away to stand in front of another student, but in a few seconds quickly direct class attention back to the former student, who will have rearranged his/her sitting posture into a more relaxed, less defensive position.

(5) A more general activity might be to pretend to be giving a massive homework assignment, discussing something about it so that students will be looking up at your face rather than writing down page numbers. Do not smile; keep a neutral or stern face, and try to catch and hold, in turn, the eyes of as many students as possible. Watch for leg movements, arm crossing, and other indicators of self-protection and discomfort. Then relax and "smile" while describing what certain students have been doing while you were "giving the assignment." Finally, tell the trainees that this homework assignment was not "for real." Watch for and point out the general relaxation of postures that then occurs throughout the entire room.

The purposes of these activities are the following:

(1) To make the trainees aware of the size of their own idiosyncratic "space bubbles" and that if a foreign student or anyone else unwittingly enters this space, the trainee can expect to have negative feelings toward that person.

(2) To show the American roles of "facing postures" and holding eye contact in determining space bubble boundaries.

(3) To demonstrate unconscious reactions of Americans in standing-superior vs. seated-inferior roles.

(4) To show that general body posture reflects a person's tension or relaxation.

These simple activities will serve to sensitize the teacher trainees to the power which nonverbal behavior unconsciously exerts on Americans. Students from other cultures also have built-in but different reactions to the invasion of their space bubbles, to sustained eye contact, and to the actions of a superior. The value system and mores of each culture create the foundation on which the nonverbal communication patterns of its members are built. One of the best preparations for understanding the nonverbal behavior of foreign students is a study of their respective cultures. This understanding of what is actually the foundation can help make sense out of much of the nonverbal behavior of each student.

It is dangerous but true that a similar bit of nonverbal behavior can have a variety of meanings across cultures. And on the other hand, the same mental state may be shown in opposite ways across cultures. Interest and attentiveness may be shown by a Latin American through head nodding, hand motions, sustained eye contact with the speaker, smiles, and even a running commentary on the lecture to a friend, if it is being enjoyed. By a Japanese, however, attentiveness may be shown through a slight frown, lowered eyes with no contact, head bowed and motionless, and no hand movements. The point is that people from different cultures unconsciously display their emotions and mental states in different ways. The unprepared trainee may try to get a traditional Japanese to "look up here and pay attention" or try to stop the frequent low comments passing between two Latin Americans—simply because in an American context these all signal a lack of attentiveness, which equals disrespect.

Some video examples of ways certain non-American ESL students have unconsciously acted and reacted in ESL classes have been taped at the University of Michigan English Language Institute. These examples record only what *has happened* there; they do not predict what else may happen. In a similar situation, other students from these same cultural backgrounds might react differently—in fact, these same students might themselves react differently. The following describes behaviors which

ESL teachers may face; we need to be prepared for them:

(1) In the first example, the man in the lower right-hand corner of the screen is under consideration. The teacher shushes the class while he and others are taking a test. Is he angry?

The sound of the "shshsh"is followed by the student's slamming his pencil down on his desk, looking up and around the room without a smile, muttering something unintelligible. But he was not angry. He had just finished his test ahead of everyone else and wanted the teacher to know he didn't find it difficult. However, without a smile, his nonverbal behavior would indicate anger to most Americans.

(2) Next, a class is observed. Who in this class is bored? Who is interested?

The class is sitting motionless, with all faces totally expressionless except for one student who, right at the end of the segment, nods assent. It appears that only one person here is really paying attention.

(3) However, in the next segment, which takes place later, this same group is listening to one of their notoriously long-winded classmates expound upon the virtues of medical diagnosis of illness by computer. They are more-or-less politely paying attention, but their smirks, posture shifts, and direction-of-gaze shifts indicate real boredom. None were really bored earlier; there, they were concentrating and paying good attention in their own culturally appropriate, poker-faced ways. However, in the second segment, they all really were bored, as an analysis of what preceded and followed that segment indicated.

(4) The next section is a close-up of two men; both are frustrated by a test they are taking. The one on the left shows his frustration by his gestures, the one on the right shows it by copying from his partner instead of trying to struggle with the question. Incidentally both of these men are from the same Latin American background, but each reacts differently under the same stressful situation.

The man on the left gestures with a pounding motion of his left hand, writes an answer, erases it, and writes it again; the man on the right is expressionless and motionless, except when he looks over and reads the first man's answers, then copies one of them.

(5) Next, a Japanese announces that he will demonstrate to the others in his class just what gestures a Japanese uses when he is puzzled or thinking. He however cannot pin-point anything special and is *himself* puzzled as to what to do; his puzzlement shows unconsciously before he finally lights on what to him is "obvious puzzlement"—the downcast head with hand on his chin as Rodin used in "The Thinker." He misses entirely his own ingressive hiss and head tilt combination which is so obviously "Japanesey" to American on-lookers.

(6) In the first part of the next bit, everyone disagrees with what is being said, but only the person in the lower right shows his disagreement by a hand gesture; this does not mean that any of the others agree—they just do not show their disagreement in the way this one person so obviously does.

In the continuation of this disagreement situation, the fellow in the upper left is talking about the use of cooking bananas—plantains or *platanos*—and mistakenly says they are used for "soap" when he means "used for soup." The two girls in front of him disagree and look at each other, quizzing each other with "Soap? Soap? No!" They turn toward the speaker with frowns and object. He symbolically pushes them away with his hand, manages to otherwise ignore them, and continues to talk to the teacher about the bananas.

(7) In this section, a Latin American man struggles for words to discuss insurance costs, goes blank for vocabulary, is embarrassed, smiles, looks down, and finally comes to life again, stands erect, and goes on, as he figures out alternative words to use to get his point across.

(8) The next segment shows a Japanese student who is not expecting to have to say anything, since the fellow in the white shirt next to him has been carrying on a good discussion. When this Japanese is surprised by being called on, he smiles, strokes his face, scratches his neck, and looks aside. Even though his mind is as much a blank as was the Latin American's in the previous segment, his embarrassment signals are different, almost the opposite—he continues to sit erect, no large arm or torso movements, with no great facial expression changes.

What has just been described above may not be news to any experienced teachers. They would probably recognize the general message of each of these student's nonverbal communication if they had occurred in their own classrooms. As described here or even when viewed on videotape outside of the total classroom context, these may not be so easily recognizable. There are always problems in recognizing any nonverbal behavior bit once it is out of its context; this, therefore, illustrates one prime rule in interpreting nonverbal behavior; nothing can be understood definitely outside of the kinesic cluster in which it occurs. That is, a smile cannot be interpreted unless one also notes the angle of the head, what the rest of the body is doing, and what precedes and follows that smile. Futhermore, as the reader has probably noted already, the lack of transcription of the words that accompanied the actions described (or the lack of a sound track when viewing these on videotape) makes it difficult to interpret the nonverbal behavior. It is necessary to know what the language context of the behavior is and also what significance the language context and the total nonverbal behavior has within the framework of the culture in which it occurs.

For instance, contrary to American beliefs, that frustrated student copying from the other one was not being "American-dishonest" nor trying to hide his copying—he was just sharing in the knowledge

his neighbor happened to have at that point. He fully expects to reciprocate whenever *he* knows the answer. Group effort, you know!

Video examples such as these can be used most effectively to train teachers. Trainees should be asked to analyze what is being revealed *unconsciously* by the students. This technique will point up their own personal and cultural body language biases, as they realize they have misread at least some of the signals being sent. If the "copyist" we have just referred to is seen as a "cheater," then the trainee's possible moralistic reactions to that student could be disastrous for the student's motivation. If this copying is seen, instead, as acceptable behavior—perhaps as even an obligation—in the student's own culture, then the trainee may be able to point out more tactfully and sympathetically what the rules of the game are for taking tests in American school

serve to reveal the mental attitudes of our students —provided we have some idea of their rules for displaying these attitudes.

As the chart indicates, the same bit of behavior may be used consciously at one time and unconsciously at another—a politician may have written into his TV script exactly when he is to point into the camera at his unseen audience and say "I want your vote." The rest of us unconsciously use this same pointing gesture when we refer to an object and say "that."

The other parameter on the chart separates that nonverbal behavior which semantically supports the language being spoken from that which is either unrelated to or actually negating what is being said. When this negative, non-supporting behavior occurs, we have something like a sarcastically said, "I really enjoyed your paper." In this case the speaker is

	[+Verbal-supportive]	[-Verbal-supportive]
[+Conscious]	Planned emphatic gestures (e.g., TV politicians' pointing into the camera lens at his unseen audience	Sarcasm (e.g., holding one's nose when saying "It smells good")
[-Conscious]	Explanatory gestures, emblems (e.g., pointing to an object when saying "that")	Nervous mannerisms (e.g., finger drumming, toe tapping, doodling, throat clearing)

Figure 1
Categories of NVC
(adapted from Taylor, 1975b)

Paul Eckman has done considerable research on what he calls "facial displays"—the ways different cultures allow their members to show their feelings. Although Eckman found that there are some basic emotions which can be recognized across cultures, he has suggested that each culture has a set of "masking rules" which tell a person what sort of facial expression and other nonverbal behavior is appropriate and permissible for displaying each emotion under specific circumstances (Eckman, 1972). For example, in American sports, the happy victor may smile, but as Eckman pointed out, in the Miss America Pageant, the equally overjoyed winner must cry (Boucher, 1974). In the classroom ESL teachers need to know as many of the display rules as possible for each of the cultures from which our students come if we are to be even *partially* successful in reading the body language signals of our students.

Included here is an informal chart illustrating how two of the important nonverbal communication (NVC) parameters work together. Any bit of nonverbal behavior can either be conscious (+conscious) or unconscious (-conscious). So far we have been talking mainly about the unconscious ones, since they best

obviously fully conscious of what he is saying and plans to negate his verbal message. Non-supportive behavior can also be unconscious and still negative, as we had earlier when "I really enjoyed your paper" was said with slumping shoulders, slightly lowered head, neutral face, and a horizontally shaking head.

It is not always possible to tell when another person uses nonverbal behavior unconsciously. For example, it is often difficult for me to tell if a non-American is deliberately pushing me out of his/her way or just unconsciously moving ahead through a crowded area. Our immediate American reaction to being pushed is irritation or anger, not because of any physical injury but because a push is an American nonverbal signal of discourtesy and contempt. My observation is that it is relatively easy for an American to "forgive" someone who either verbally or nonverbally communicates something inappropriate only if that person "didn't mean to offend"—that is, if it is interpreted by the American as [-conscious] behavior. But if, as in the ESL classroom, the nonverbal communication is not only sent but is received unconsciously, the teacher may react negatively to a student's innocent but inappropriate NVC and still

be unable to put his finger on why he or she unconsciously finds that student so "disagreeable."

The great danger, then, of a teacher's being ignorant of nonverbal communication is that, whether we realize it or not, we react to the nonverbal signals of our foreign students according to our American nonverbal code—and much of the time we will misjudge these students. As trainers of teachers, we must as a *minimum* make sure future teachers are aware of this subtle form of American cultural imperialism.

What follows now is a description of some video examples of the "fun" part of nonverbal communication studies. This is the language of gestures, of "identifiers," of "signifiers," of "emblems," or whatever term you wish to use. These usually occur in what I call "kinesic clusters" and are combinations of movements and expressions which carry a specific equivalent in the spoken language. Each such gesture is made up of what the whole body is doing at a given time, even though a hand motion or eyebrow movement may be either the most noticeable or most significant feature.

As observers from outside the culture, we usually note only the more prominent feature of a gesture cluster, and therefore may not be able to imitate it with accuracy, no matter how hard we try. Ms. Adelaide Heyde, the teacher of the video-taped class tried during a previous class to find out from the five Japanese in her class what their ingressive hiss meant. She asked them, "What does ishhhh mean?" The first Japanese didn't recognize it—nor the second, third, fourth, or fifth, even though some of them were *themselves* going "ishhhh" through their own teeth while they thought about her question. What was wrong? Although her vocalization was correct enough, she had not tilted her head and squinted her eyes appropriately to signal "I'm puzzled." Without the rest of the nonverbal pieces, none of the five Japanese could recognize that vocal bit of their behavior which all Americans react to soon after they begin to talk with Japanese.

The following gestures were performed in an ESL class by students from various countries as a speaking and listening assignment both to stimulate discussion and to make the students aware of nonverbal communication differences in general. An earlier attempt by this teacher to get these students to respond to *her* demonstrations of American nonverbal communication were not nearly so effective as was this sharing of each other's gestures—possibly because they may have thought she was teaching them what "correct" gestures were in the United States and were trying to memorize them just as they would memorize new vocabulary items. Incidentally, at the end of all this, the students *did* ask the teacher the meanings of certain American gestures they had observed—and all were obscene.

Conscious "gestures" (Birdwhistell's term), as defined and demonstrated by ESL students.

a. Making a promise—Arab: chin/beard grasping or stroking (an Iranian girl in the center of the picture smiled and reared back in her chair when she recognized this gesture as the Arab man demonstrated it).
—Japanese: children hook each other's little fingers to promise each other something.

b. Come here—Japanese: index finger beckoning, and also palm up finger flutter vs. palm down flutter (the first two carry human-to-animal or superior-to-inferior connotations, while the last one is polite for use with people of any level.).

Get out of here—Japanese: snapping index finger out from thumb, or back-hand wave, both made at the side, below the waist.

c. I like (want) that—Latin: eyes widen, roll around, with a smile.

d. Over there—Latin: eye and eyebrow "pointing," mouth pointing.

e. Thief, to steal—Latin: rotate wrist as if opening a gas cap.
—Japanese: hooked index finger, wrist curling in and out.

f. Fail exam, get fired ("discharged")—Japanese: edge of hand chops or slices along the side of the neck.
—Latin: index finger slices across the throat, followed by a wrist flick and finger slap.

g. Counting—Japanese: thumb down first.
—Iranian: little finger down first.
—Latin: touch finger tips with thumb of same hand, starting from the little finger.
—Arab: same as Iranian.
—Japanese children: extend fingers out one at a time.

h. Stopping a quarrel—Japanese: both hands pushing down, palms forward.

i. Quarrelers—Japanese: crossed index fingers, as if crossing swords.

j. Starting a quarrel—Japanese children: pull down lower eyelid; stick out the tongue a little or flip the index finger out from nose tip, palm in.

k. Girl friend—Japanese: little finger outstretched, other fingers closed.

l. Boss, father—Japanese: fist with thumb up.

Each of these is only superficially described here to indicate what the videotape recorded when these particular students attempted to demonstrate what emblems they remembered using to express certain

concepts. They are of importance to ESL teachers primarily as representative bits of culturally tied student behavior which, hopefully, teachers will not misunderstand when exposed to them.

The teacher of this class, Ms. Heyde, related something which shows the great value to the teacher of learning about nonverbal communication. For about two months she had worked with this particular class, but felt put off by one Japanese student, an older medical doctor (the one who demonstrated "come here" and "get out of here"). He never looked at her in class, rarely smiled, and answered only when called on—just sat there like a "bump on a log." Her thoughts ranged from "He doesn't want to be taught by a woman—and especially by such a young one" to "I'm wasting his time and money trying to teach him." She could not relax when talking to this apparent stone wall.

About that time, it was pointed out to her that if this doctor were traditional Japanese, he would expect to show respect to his teacher by averting his eyes, by not speaking up and giving his unworthy opinion, and he would smile primarily only when embarrassed; his proper Japanese classroom role would be that of a sponge to soak up the wisdom the teacher was willing to impart to the class. For him to do otherwise could be disrespectful for him, a very proper, educated professional man.

Ms. Heyde went on to study the two hours of videotapes from which some of these segments were taken, and as she recognized in this doctor's behavior his nonverbal attempts to show kindness and consideration to her—but in a Japanese way—her attitude toward him changed. *He* then recognized from *her* new unconscious nonverbal signals that he was free to take an active part in the class, and he began to open up. She in turn used the class video-taped nonverbal communication assignment as the opener for a number of good talks with him, explaining how *she* had originally misread his nonverbal language and how important it would be for him in his further university studies to appear more relaxed and friendly to his American colleagues. Once this teacher had recognized her unconscious negative reactions to misunderstood nonverbal communication, real communication became possible.

Just being a native speaker of American English does not make one an ESL teacher. In the same way, even though we are teacher trainers, just being a native "doer" of American body language will not make us able to teach "Standard American Body Language," if it actually exists and can be taught. The best I feel we can do as teacher trainers is to make this next generation of ESL teachers sensitive to the role of nonverbal communication in their future ESL teaching.

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